SUNDAY SCHOOL JOURNAL
for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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The Children.

BY MRS. H. M. W. HILL.

IN country lone a sinuous road-way lay,
On which a maiden slowly picked her way;
Its dust lay deep, and pebbles sharp were there,
Its length besprinkling o'er the hill-side bare.
The sun had warmly wooed the morning dew
To soar aloft, in fleecy clouds anew;
While he, insatiate, fiercely glowed
On maiden walking on her daily road
To country school-house, where her duties lay
In teaching urchins wisdom's toilsome way,
Incarceration-hours to her seemed they,
Of minutes sixty, full and long, to-day.
The pupils? Thirty corporate little ones—
Not hers, but other people's, girls and sons.
The thoughts of many trials met each day,
The oppressive heat, the dusty, lonely way,
Had written on her brow a weary frown,
The whilst her hands hung limply down—
Thus step by step she toiled her way along,
Until she neared the little youthful throng.

A shout of joy, a sound of pattering feet,
The children run with glee herself to greet;
With chubby hands, and clinging finger-tips,
And eager upraised rosy, laughing lips,
In eager tones their morning welcome shout,
While gayly compassing her path about.
Their ways are wands, which to her vision's ken
Disclose quite other views, unseen till then.
The sun gave brightness, not oppressive heat,
A verdant turf made boundary for the street,
And buttercups and daisies, fair and white,
Shone out instead of torturing pebbles bright;
The school hours, not of minutes component,
But formed a happy day, too quickly spent.

O children dear! who to our weary vision lend
A flawless lens, that makes of foe a friend,
That shows us flowerets thickly clustering where
Our eyes had noted only stones so bare,
Your loving deeds and trusting words so gay
Bright span with rainbow arches life's drear way!

Chicago, Ill.

A Persuasive Thaw.

WE acknowledge the influence of "a good heavy rain" in liberating this land of liberty from its present bondage to ice and snow, a vigorous downpour like the clatter of a cavalry-troop over country highway and city avenue. Still, is there any thing that is so effective as a good-sized, old-fashioned four-days' thaw? Here it is! It arrived last night, a soft-footed mist. It blew no trumpet and swung no banner, but quietly occupied all the hill-tops and then diffused itself throughout all the valleys. How effective! It is touching out-of-the-way points, recesses under rocks and behind old roots that no rain has reached for the last twelve months. It also reaches in-the-way points. Old Farmer Slow has been trying to hack out of existence a huge mat of ice carelessly allowed to form before his very door-step. He now smiles to see this obstacle rapidly, silently dissolving before the persuasiveness of this thaw.

Have we not seen the above tactics repeated elsewhere? There are some people who go to work on a trouble like a quarrel or misunderstanding, in a style that is like a "good, heavy rain." In their noisy way they do effect something, but contrast them with Brother So-and-So. He is very quiet, but he has the persuasiveness of a spring-thaw. His style is not to storm at a trouble and bombard it furiously, but in his quiet way he surrounds dissentient hearts with the spirit of charity, forgiveness, and affectionate prayer (which some prayer is not). Just there, he holds on like the mist that lowers its folds hour after hour before our windows. What quantities

of hard, icy feeling will soften and dissipate before his methods, reaching not only open dissensions, but the misunderstandings that sensitive souls hide away and secretly mourn over! It is marvelously persuasive, this patient, kindly, charitable fashion. Would it not be better for us all to speak for a "thaw" at once and try it in our neighborhood?

Something for the Presiding Elders.

A MEETING was held in New York city in December last consisting of the presiding elders of some half-dozen Conferences of the neighborhood. Bishop Bowman delivered a very interesting address on the work of the presiding elder, and among other subjects spoke of the shortcomings of many incumbents of the office. According to the report in *The Christian Advocate* he said: "It says in the Discipline that the presiding elder shall report to the Annual Conference the names of all traveling preachers within his district who shall neglect to observe the rules for the instruction of children. I have never heard one report yet."

During the nearly fourteen years of his episcopacy Bishop Bowman has presided in many Annual Conferences and has heard reports from many presiding elders; but he has yet to hear the first report giving the names of the preachers who have failed to observe these rules. What the other Bishops might give as their experience we do not know.

It has been our privilege to visit many Annual Conferences on official business and otherwise, yet we cannot now recall a solitary instance of a report such as the Discipline calls for, nor do we remember ever hearing a Bishop ask the presiding elders for it. Either all the preachers keep the rules, and therefore there are no delinquents to report, or else the presiding elders fail in their duty.

Something for the Pastors.

IN the same address alluded to in the preceding article, the Bishop related an incident which is certainly very suggestive as well as rather amusing. He said, "In a Sunday-school, not long since, I asked, 'How many of you have seen an elephant?' Every hand was raised. 'What was his name?' 'Jumbo,' said they. I asked, 'How many of you ever saw a catechism?' There was not a hand up, and the Discipline requires that the pastor shall instruct the people in the catechism! It requires that the children shall be properly instructed in the catechism by the pastor."

The Bishop was a teacher for many years, and hence knows how to catch the boys. And he assuredly did catch them by means of the elephant. But it is not pleasant to think of Sunday-school children knowing more about Jumbo than about the Methodist catechism. If the pastor was present when the Bishop thus caught the children, what must his feelings have been? Had he performed the duty required of him by the Discipline, some of his scholars would have been able to signify that they had seen a catechism. In our efforts to get our pastors to use the catechism of our Church it is a great pleasure for us to have episcopal sanction and aid. We have been working on this line for years, though often regretting that success was not more manifest. In 1872, when what is known as the "Berean System" was begun, we made the catechism an important part of the lesson scheme. In 1876 the editor of this JOURNAL succeeded in getting the following resolutions adopted by the General Conference Committee on Sunday-schools and Tracts, and passed by the Conference:

Resolved, 1. That we cordially approve the course of "Bible Study for the family and the Sunday-school," adopted in 1872 by the Sunday-School Union of our Church, embodying the lessons of the International Series, the Catechism of the Church, select passages of Scripture to be committed to memory, and special lessons on the doctrines, usages, and benevolent agencies of the Church.

Resolved, 2. That we urge upon our pastors the importance of employing this system of Church lessons in all our churches; and that we especially insist upon the use of the Catechism by the pastors, according to the Discipline of the Church, in the family, the Sunday-school, and at special meetings appointed for that purpose.—*Journal*, p. 365.

From this position we have never swerved; and yet every now and then some one who ought to know better asserts in speech or in print that the "Berean System" is driving the catechism out of the Sunday-school, thus showing total ignorance or forgetfulness of the fact that the catechism is as really a part of that system as the Bible. Let the Berean System be carried out and the catechism will be kept in the Sunday-school and faithfully used.

We are glad, therefore, to have our excellent senior Bishop as an ally in this work. If the Bishops will occasionally jog the failing memory of presiding elders, and if the presiding elders will faithfully admonish the pastors, and if the pastors will diligently perform their duty, we shall not long bear the reproach of having Sunday-school scholars who know more about Jumbo than they do about the catechism.

The Death of Youth.

ONE of the hard facts confronting us in life is the death of youth—bright, promising youth. The life of a babe we know to be brittle. Infancy is very fragile ware. Old age expects soon to reach its last

mile-stone. It is youth to whom death comes as a surprise. Shall we say it is a defeat?

Some things say it is a victory. Life goes on, happy life. We know how happy the imagery of the Revelation makes the heavenly life. To the Jerusalem above, we love to apply the language appropriated in that rugged prophesy of Zechariah to the Jerusalem here: "And the streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." It is not only a happy but useful existence. Youth here is in God's service; is it less so in heaven? The powers that droop and die at the touch of the frost-line of death have new vitality there. O what growth! It is a growing that also means serving. We shall find them again, the imagination, the memory, the strength of intellect, the powers that delighted us here, but in what ripeness! Found, too, will be our beloved in holy service, in garments shining with the luster of the King's house.

A Diamond-Book.

Every student of the Bible is deeply impressed with the vast amount of spiritual truth here accumulated. Scripture truth is a diamond with innumerable facets. This diamond is often showing some new side to us, some new phase of meaning, flashing out of a heart of fire its peculiar beauty. How many other books we read, quickly exhaust, and then lay aside! Compared with these human accumulations of knowledge, the Word of God is up like a mountain by the side of a pebble. "There is more in God's book than in yours," cried Joan of Arc to her opponents who were quoting out of their authorities. It is this abundance of resources in the Word of God which constitutes one evidence that the book is from God. That which has a divine fullness must have a divine origin.

Veneering.

At the door of a prisoner's cell swung soft, white curtains. As one entered, above his head he saw the cage of a canary bird, another prisoner in a gay cell. A strip of carpeting was on the floor. Map, pictures, clock, were on the walls. It seemed a cheerful, attractive home, and yet all this was only veneer-work. It was surface-covering. Underneath were cold, stony walls. Does the bird sing? A response may be the "tramp, tramp" of its master and others led out for their food like cattle to a watering-trough. Does the canary sing once more? An answer may be the "tramp, tramp" of a line of men to the work-shops like slaves going to their galleys. No, there is no freedom here. Birds and carpet are only veneering.

Is there not a vast quantity of veneer-work in this life? Do not men in the slavery of sin, in bondage to the fear of death, try to gild their cells with a few hasty experiences that they call "pleasures?" They listen to music, but it is only the clank of coated chains now softly jingled.

There is only one place of true happiness, and that is outside the prison-walls. Christ brings release, the freedom of the lark's wing beating up from the earth, and the ecstasy of the lark's song mounting toward the sky.

Concerning Typographical Errors.

Special effort is made to have the pages of our Journal as free as possible from typographical errors; yet, in spite of all the care bestowed, errors will now and then occur. Sometimes these are of trifling importance and easily corrected by the reader, though they mar the beauty of the page; at other times they are serious, and occasionally make a complete perversion of the idea meant to be expressed. All this is very annoying and aptly illustrates the impossibility of absolute perfection in human beings. The number of books or papers issued without error is so small that we doubt if any of our readers ever saw one. Some books on which extraordinary care has been bestowed, and which have been supposed to be typographically perfect, have been found after careful inspection to share the common destiny of imperfection. The most, therefore, that any one can ask or hope for is, that the greatest care be taken to secure accuracy in every respect.

The wonder is not that there are errors in a periodical like ours, but that the errors are so few. Our readers who are not versed in typography will doubtless be surprised to know the number of pieces of type-metal a compositor handles on every page, and then will be still further surprised that so few of these are misplaced. There are from twelve to fifteen thousand different pieces of type-metal on every page of this Journal, according to the size of the type used. In the Journal of last month there was a total of nearly five hundred thousand pieces, including types, spaces, and leads. Every one of these had to be carefully taken from its place by the deft fingers of the compositor and set up until the proper words and sentences were in type. The hand of the compositor has to move about eighteen inches on an average to reach a type, and about the same distance in returning to place the type in the composing-stick. This requires a motion of about a yard in the handling of every piece. Thus in our February number the hand moved through half a million yards of space, or very nearly two hundred and eighty-five miles! Is it any wonder if the brain becomes weary, or the eye dim, or the hand faltering, so that occasionally some of the many thousand tiny pieces of type-metal become misplaced?

To detect and mark these errors is the work of

the proof-reader, and he is also expected to call the attention of the editor to what may seem to him to be errors in the original manuscript. This manuscript the compositor is expected rigidly to follow, the old rule being, "Follow copy if it takes you out of the window." But the proof-reader may call editorial attention to all such slips of the pen, so that they may receive editorial correction. Of course there is a possibility that the proof-reader may himself misapprehend the passage; but his "query" is sure to receive the attention of the editor. The proof-reader is often thus of great service to the editor; for it is a fact, which, perhaps, ought not to be made public, that even editors are subject to error.

After the typographical errors have been corrected, the proof is sent to the editor for any changes which he may deem necessary. Then a final revision is given by the proof-reader, and the page is ready to be electrotyped.

As a matter of course, during all these careful readings and revisions many errors are detected and corrected, and one would suppose it next to impossible that, with so many well-trained eyes to watch, there should be any errors left. But alas! such are the frailties of poor humanity, that after the work is finished and given to the public, so that it is beyond correction, there is sure to be some error which no eye was vigilant enough to discover.

We cannot therefore claim infallibility for our JOURNAL, but we do claim that as few errors will be found in these pages as in the pages of any similar publication, and in the present state of imperfection that is all we can hope for.

The History of Class No. 9.

BY ITS TEACHER.

[THE Rev. Isaac Dale, of the North-west Indiana Conference, and stationed at La Porte, sends us the following narrative of one of the classes in his Sunday-school. It was written by its teacher, Miss Fannie Allen, who, in spite of bodily feebleness, has, with the exception of a few months' absence, been in change of the class for nearly fourteen years. Though not written with a view to publication, but simply to be read at a regular meeting of the Sunday-school Board of the Church, we trust its presentation here may be encouraging to other teachers. —ED.]

It was not till I had been unmistakably convinced that God required it of me that I consented to become the teacher of class No. 9. It was composed at that time of six boys from ten to twelve years of age; and up to the present time there have been on the class record seventy-seven names in all. Forty-two of these young men have professed faith in Christ, and have become Church members, the most of them uniting with the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Since 1876 forty-nine young men from that class have left La Porte to make themselves homes in other places. They can be found to-day in New York, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Kansas, Dakota, Oregon, and California.

I need not say that there have been conflicts, temptations, and dark hours in my experience as a teacher. As may be seen from the record, this class was not composed of good boys that die young, but of the most wide-awake, fun-loving, and restless set that ever fell to the lot of teacher or tried the patience of a superintendent. In changing about in the school we came at one time to be the "class in the corner." There was nothing the matter with that corner only it happened to be the one directly under the eye of the superintendent. It was not the place then, and it is not the place to-day, in my judgment, for a class of restless boys. We did not make all the noise in the Sunday-school, but the superintendent thought we did. It was the verdict of this Sunday-school Board in other days that the boys of this class were the worst that any school was ever afflicted with. As I struggled by constant watchfulness and succeeded by the blessing of God in holding them in the school year after year, I stood almost alone in believing that any good would result from my efforts. And as I waited weary years before seeing any fruits of my labor, I sometimes lost heart and grew discouraged and felt like giving up the class. But the result of my struggles leads me to say to all teachers, Never give up a scholar. Especially let me plead for the boys. How few realize the trials, temptations, discouragements, and heart-aches that boys have to contend with out in the world, or the allurements specially held out to lead them astray. I should never have known these things had not my boys come and told me all about them. Don't give the boys up. If they are bad in the school, how much worse will they be out of it? Hunt them up every week. This is the only way you can hold some of them in the school. You say, "This is discouraging work." Yes, it is. But those who seek to lead them into evil are not easily discouraged. They are persistent in their efforts. Shall we not be as earnest, constant, and persistent in our efforts to lead them to eternal life?

I am glad to report that there has been a bright side to my experience. There has been much in my connection with the class as its teacher that has brought joy to my heart. I have had the respect and confidence of all its members. The warm, loving sympathy I have received from them in the dark hours of sorrow and bereavement that have come to me personally, and the many long, cheerful, and encouraging letters that came to me from all the class while I was at one time absent from them for some months, and that still come from those that are far away to-day, have been a great source of comfort and consolation. But that which has brought the greatest happiness has been the salvation of souls. God has heard and answered prayer, and some have been won to Christ in this class and are to-day happy and faithful in his service.

A Visit to Epworth and its Rectory.

BY REV. GEORGE W. JAMES.

Some eleven miles from my native town in the county of Lincoln is the celebrated town or village of Epworth, the birthplace of three men notable in Methodism. For not only were John and Charles Wesley born here, but Alexander Kilham, one of the earliest Methodist reformers, here also first saw the light. The town is in the center of that peculiar inland island, celebrated by many writers, and known as the Isle of Axholme.

There is no railway accommodation to Epworth, the nearest station being that of Haxey, five miles or more away. So, on a recent visit, I determined to drive all the way from the old town of Gainsborough, as I had many, many times done before. The road for three miles is along the side of the beautiful river Trent, and after half an hour's drive we board the ferry-boat to cross at Stockwith. The old, weather-beaten ferry-man seizes the crank, winds the chain over the "never-ending wheel," and in a short time we are landed on the other side. Another two or three miles bring us to Haxey, the capital of "The Isle," and then to Burnham, from the hill of which we can see the smoke ascending from the Epworth homes, for the town is almost hidden in one of the valleys beyond us.

After the descent from the Burnham hill, and the rise on the other side, Epworth is close before us. As we are desirous of seeing the old cross at which Wesley preached on Sunday, August 2, 1761, and then the church and parsonage, we leave the straight road, which leads to the lower part of the town, and branch off to the right. Entering the street we see that we are in an old-fashioned and somewhat "pokey" place, for the population is just about the same as it was two hundred years ago, about two thousand souls. And now before us is the market place, the old Wesley chapel to the right, stores or shops on all sides, four streets leading to its center, where stands the old market cross. Here stood John Wesley on that memorable evening in 1761, and preached to the people who years before had listened to him in the parish church. But under what different circumstances! Then, a curate in the Church of England, but in a state of spiritual darkness; now, practically an outcast from the Established Church, but in full enjoyment of the light of the Gospel. Even these uneducated, illiterate people realized the difference, for many of them under his now spiritual guidance found the Lord Jesus to the joy of their souls.

Crossing the market place we pass down the street opposite to the one by which we entered, and at the end turn to the right, where we find the rectory and the church. The latter is reached from the former by a beautiful avenue lined with young trees. It is an ancient stone structure, with ivy patches upon it here and there. Inside, in the aisle near the door, stands the old stone font at which all the Wesley children were doubtless baptized. On either side of the communion table are two antique chairs which were no doubt ancient when John Wesley's father used them, and which occupied the same position of honor when he himself officiated in the old building. A broken stone coffin is one of the relics that have a place in the church, and the old roughly made oaken parish chest stands near this sarcophagus.

The tomb of Samuel Wesley, Sr., which stands at the east end of the church-yard, is exactly as generally described, although of course suffering from the ravages of time. What a wonderful scene it must have been when that large congregation assembled in the church-yard, awed by the intense and solemn earnestness of the preacher, standing over the ashes of his sainted father, and discoursing from the text, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost!"

A short distance from the grave-yard is the rectory. After the destruction of the old rectory by fire Samuel Wesley built another house close by its site. The foundations of the former structure have been discovered, and the walls are all pretty clearly marked, immediately to the south front of the present house, the gypsum, of which the foundations are composed, lying so near the surface that no flower or shrubs whose roots strike deeply into the ground will grow there. The structure itself was, in its main features, like others that still remain in Epworth in their original condition, namely, built of timber and plaster, covered with a straw thatch, and floored with a peculiar composition, chiefly of gypsum. The present edifice was built by Samuel Wesley in the early part of the year 1710, is mainly of brick, with a roof of clay tiles such as are commonly used in England, and is now so much altered that it takes a close observer to discover the original from the added parts; for each of the succeeding incumbents has made some addition or alteration even down to the present one, Canon Overton, whose alterations in the year 1883—when he was appointed to the living—brought to light some most interesting facts. In August of that year, when preparing to put in a new window in the kitchen on the south side, the workmen discovered two old oaken lintels where there were formerly two windows. The lintels, or beams, were much charred by fire, and the question was immediately raised, As there is no sign of fire upon any of the adjacent parts of this wall, the probability is that these are a portion of the oak taken from the old rectory which was burned down in 1709, when John Wesley was rescued from the fire. These oaken beams had evidently formed part of the timber framing of a house, for there is now in one piece a mortice, and in the other piece a hole where the oaken fastening-pin went through. And the charring shows conclusively that they had originally been in a building which had been on fire.

Another most interesting discovery made by the workmen about the same time was that of some writing on the wall of the room that was doubtless

used as the Wesley school-room, and that had been hidden under several layers of wall-paper for over a century and a half. All readers of John Wesley's life will remember the school in the rectory, of which Mrs. Susannah Wesley was the principal teacher. But no one had ever been able to locate this school-room until the above-named discovery gave fair evidence that this particular wall had something to do with it. As the old paper was torn down a quantity of writing was revealed on a wall that forms part of a passage on the first floor, but there are now strong reasons for believing that this wall originally formed part of a good-sized school-room at the top of some old narrow stairs. On the low part of the wall capital letters of the alphabet, in various shapes and sizes, were found scratched as with a nail by the hands of children; while higher up were the words, "Martha Wesley," and "Anne Wesley," written apparently in red chalk, in a rather fair hand, and in the peculiar style possessed by the whole family. There are also some crude drawings of heads, which, however, do not reveal any extraordinary talent.

I also visited the attic, christened "Jeffrey" by Emilia Wesley, after an old man of that name who had died there. Recent writers have affirmed that this attic must have been the head-quarters of the celebrated Epworth ghost. It is a long room, being the whole length of the old part of the house, and these same writers imagine that it must have been used as the store-house for the tithes that Mr. Wesley received from his parishioners.

A visit to Epworth, its church, its grave-yard, its rectory, is one never to be forgotten by those who have any interest in Wesley or in Methodism.

The Happy Art of Illustration.

BY REV. J. I. BOSWELL.

"You tell what things are, but never what they are like," was the criticism that great preacher, Robert Hall, made once upon a brother minister.

This same criticism might be made upon many a teacher in the Sunday-school. He knows the lesson, for he has studied it well, and he can tell what he knows in sentences which flow as clearly as a running brook, but somehow what he says runs through the mind of the scholar like water through a sieve, and leaves no trace behind. The truth is taught, but it is not made effective. The nail is driven, but it draws too easily out of the mind, and the labor is lost. Now, my dear teacher, learn to clinch the nail with a well-chosen illustration, and it will stay where it is driven.

For the mind, whether of the child or of the adult, delights in making comparisons. We want to know not only what a thing is, but also what it is like. We hold up as a torch that which is plain, so as to see that which is dark, and we compare truths in the spiritual world with objects which we see in the world of nature. In this way the field of truth is enlarged before our vision, and what we see is not soon forgotten. A word-picture is always a pleasant object to gaze upon, and the teacher who can draw it at will is apt to be the center of a charmed circle.

My conscientious friend, Mr. Proseaway, who has charge of the big boys' Bible class, is groping his way in a cloud of discouragement. His mind is full of thoughts about the lesson which he knows how to tell, but not to illustrate. "I cannot make an illustration," he says, "for my mind does not run in that direction." How does he know whereof he affirms? Did he ever try to put his mind on the right track, and then apply a little steam in the way of well-directed energy? He certainly has imagination, for he can understand and enjoy the illustrations which the preacher gives in the sermon. If so, let him have hope and courage, and even he may find, to his joyful surprise, that he has learned the happy art of illustration. Nothing is impossible to him that wills.

The world and the word are full of beautiful analogies, my friend, and if you cannot see them with your own eyes, then use the eyes of other people. Begin in a humble way, and ask easy questions. The truth of God is like light, like rain, like seed which falls from the sower's hand, like a handful of leaven, and like a pearl of great price. Now ask why truth is like these things, and when you have found out, then tell others. This may seem like a childish step for you to take, but it is a step in the right direction, and in the work of the teacher nothing is of small importance.

Advance a step further, and study the poetry which is hidden in many of the words we use. Many words are poetry in a fossil state, and I have found the study of the dictionary to be a great help to the imagination. It has been to me as suggestive as a poem. Let the man who laughs at the idea of finding poetry in the pages of a dictionary study the history of words, and trace them to the poetic age in which they were born, and he will find food for thought. Yonder preacher talks of tribulation, and he says: "The very word is instructive. It tells us of the old threshing-sledge which tore the chaff from the grain, and which left the pure grain to be gathered, and the chaff to be scattered by the whirlwind. So our tribulation is not to destroy, but to separate from us the evil which has grown with our growth. And then after tribulation there comes to the good man—triumph! That word "triumph" calls up the vision of the warrior coming home from the field of strife, and, amid the cheers of the assembled thousands, riding through the streets of old Rome with his crown and robes of victory, and the trophies his valor has won. But what is this to the Christian's final victory?"

Suppose you cannot originate an illustration—then borrow, and borrow with the utmost freedom. Do a big business on the capital of other men, and by and by you will have a little capital of your own. Dare to be a universal plunderer. Invest some superfluous cash in a book of illustrations, and use them freely and on the slightest pretext. Some persons will say this is very bad advice, and

tends to make one only a borrower and to restrict the free action of the mind. Nothing of the kind! If you borrow and use, you will find out that you can make an illustration quite as good for your purpose as any in the book. You will begin to see resemblances, and find that a hidden power to see a likeness between things now begins to show and to assert itself. What have you done? You first threw into your dry intellectual pump a few quarts of illustrations from Foster's collections, and now you begin to pump out a thin but growing stream of illustrations which are all your own. "I am," said Falstaff, "not only witty myself, but the cause of wit in others." "I am," Foster might well say, "not only the collector of many good illustrations, but the cause of many other good ones used by preachers and teachers and which are not found in any of my books."

The fact is, every faculty of the mind can be cultivated if one only knows how and has the spirit of perseverance. Let not the faithful teacher despair. He has imagination, and he can perceive the force and beauty of the illustrations which others use; and if so, he can make some of his own if he will first live by borrowing. The trouble yet may be that his wealth will embarrass him. What an annoyance it is when one desires to illustrate a subject to find not one or two but a whole flock of illustrations flying to him as the pigeons fly to the piazza of St. Mark's, in Venice, when the clock strikes two!

The teacher would do well to study the method which was followed by the divine Teacher. He taught first by precepts, clearly and briefly stated, and then he added the parables. Hence, "the common people heard him gladly." The method of teaching by parable, which is but one form of illustration, has ever been a favorite method in the East, and there is a peculiar charm about it.

Let no man think that to teach by illustration is only a method for children. It is suited for them and it is suited for all others. It breaks upon a subject like a burst of light through a storm-cloud, and sometimes it has all the force of an argument. It makes the theme linger in the memory. Never undervalue the art of illustration. Learn to practice the art, and then the dry and dreary desert of your instruction will blossom with flowers.

Co-operation in Sunday-School Libraries.

BY C. P. CHENEY.

THE Sunday-school library is gradually assuming a more important position in the work of the Sunday-school. If the labors and experience of those who are engaged in its direction and administration can be combined, so that each can have the benefit of the ideas and experience of all, its growth in importance and usefulness can be greatly hastened.

An association will afford opportunities to compare experiences and methods in dealing with readers and in selecting, caring for, and using books. Defects and deficiencies in present systems can be brought to light, and new ideas can be ventilated, tested by the judgment of those best acquainted with the subject, and adopted or modified.

Among the specific benefits which will result may be mentioned: Improvement in methods of arranging books on the shelves, classifying, grading, and numbering them; improvement in charging systems; discussion of different forms of catalogues, their merits and deficiencies, and the preparation of uniform rules for cataloguing; suggestions as to how to influence readers in their choice of books.

Among the concrete results which can be accomplished by co-operation are, (1) a collection of books, cards, and other devices for keeping account of loans, catalogues, stamps, book-covers, blanks, labels, furniture, and other apparatus used in Sunday-school libraries; book notices and book reviews, lists of books approved and of objectionable books, and articles in books and periodicals relating to the Sunday-school library and its management and influence, for examination by members; (2) the organization of a committee to examine books, old or new, and report on them; (3) the gathering of statistics of Sunday-school libraries, showing the number of volumes and their value, the proportion of different classes and grades of books, and the extent to which the different grades and classes are used, the number of persons who use the libraries, and the proportion which they comprise of the whole membership of the schools, the proportion of boys, young men, young women, teachers, etc., who used the libraries, etc.; (4) the preparation of uniform blanks for reporting statistics; and (5) last, but not least, the publication of a periodical devoted to the interests of the Sunday-school library, through which workers in all parts of the country can exchange ideas and compare experiences.

Such an association has been organized in Elizabeth, N. J., and will, it is hoped, be followed by many more in other cities. The subject considered at the first meeting was "The selection of books." In the discussion, the following facts were brought out:

The best plan is to have a standing committee, who will at their leisure examine every book carefully before it goes into the library.

The work of the committee will be facilitated by having some one appointed to select the books which they are to examine. Whoever is appointed should know what is the standard by which the committee make their decisions. He should also have some idea of the proportion of the different grades of readers in the school and know something of their literary tastes. On the committee there should be persons of a variety of tastes in order to avoid the danger of selecting one class of books exclusively.

Among the helps which are useful in making selections are the book notices in such periodicals as the SUNDAY-SCHOOL JOURNAL, "Sunday-School Times," "Christian Advocate," "Christian Union," etc. The "Pilgrim Teacher" publishes lists of the

books approved by the Examining Committee of the Congregational Church. Dr. Peloubet's Quarterly has lists of approved books. The Church Library Association of Cambridge, Mass., composed of some forty or more persons, publishes a catalogue of books read which are recommended for Sunday-school and parish libraries of the Protestant Episcopal Church. The Connecticut Ladies' Commission of Hartford publishes a list of books approved. The "Literary News" (New York) has a department devoted to books for the young, mentioning books for both Sunday-school and secular libraries.

"The Sunday-school Library," by Rev. A. E. Dunning, which should be in every Sunday-school library and in the hands of every librarian, contains a list of fifty books for a model Sunday-school library. Dr. Archibald's "Methodism and Literature" contains an extensive catalogue of books for Church libraries. While all these lists are helpful, yet no recommendation of any person outside of the individual school should be decisive.

"Our Youth," in its issues of January 9, 16, 23, 30, prints arguments for and against the admission of secular books.

At other meetings of the association other topics will be taken up and discussed.

Slates and Pencils for the Infant Class.

BY WILL M. MAY.

THE use of slates and pencils in the infant class has been tried and found to be a decided success.

I have used them for nearly three years, and find I can do better work with the use of slates and pencils than by any other plan I could adopt. I have a class of eighty pupils, whose ages run from three years to eight. The first thing we do after we enter our room for study is to collect the pennies. I appoint one of the number for that purpose; after this is done I appoint two of the larger ones to pass the slates around, and at the same time appoint one of the smaller ones to pass the pencils around, so that in a few minutes this work is all done. I then go to the blackboard and call their attention to the lesson, at the same time briefly reviewing the lesson of the previous Sunday. Then I proceed as follows: First, I begin with the subject of the lesson, printing each letter at a time until each word is printed and spelled, explaining the words and names of persons brought out prominently in the lesson; second, the Golden Text; third, the Doctrinal Suggestion.

At first this will take up nearly all the time, but in a few months you will be surprised to know how soon you can put down the subject of the lesson, Golden Text, Doctrinal Suggestion, and many little pictures to make the lesson plain and instructive.

It is surprising what an insight these little ones get from this plan. My class is able now to draw most of the illustrations in the JOURNAL, and draw them nicely. We draw the lesson in our own room, after which the board is taken to the lecture-room, and from it I review the whole school in from three to five minutes, and the little ones who have drawn the lesson in their room on their slates take the lead in the review.

I wish every school would try this plan. For about five cents you can buy each scholar a slate and pencil. A good feature in this plan is, you have no trouble to keep the best of order during the course of the lesson. Another is, you are always training up good material for future days in the Sabbath-school work.

Shall we Teach Children that they are Sinners?

BY L. EVA KINNEY.

AT the session of the New York State Sunday-School Convention, held in Binghamton last summer, an hour's conference meeting was held one afternoon in a class-room for the benefit of primary teachers, and others interested in that department of Sunday-school work.

Among other interesting topics discussed, this question was asked, "Shall we teach little innocent children that they are sinners?" The thought was immediately pressed home to the writer, Shall we teach them that they are *not* sinners? Then the possibility of deceiving those "little innocent children" occurred to mind, and the probable results of a continuance in the way taught, and the final outcome. But while deliberating as to whether or not we should express our views publicly, a very sunny faced lady arose, and satisfactorily answered the question in such a happy way that a grateful and pleasing sensation comes to us whenever we think of her and her words. She gave as an illustration the training of her own little boy. She said that as soon as he was old enough to manifest a spirit of rebellion and possible disobedience, whether she used the word sin or not, she would teach him that it was wrong, and he must look to Christ for forgiveness.

Previous to the discussion of this question, another lady related an incident about her little girl which we think has a bearing here also. The child had been taught to say, at night, the prayers she had learned from her mother. One night she refused to pray, or rather to say the prayers taught her. The mother felt grieved at first, but soon the child said, "I want to say something of my own," then prayed, "O Lord, forgive me for being naughty to-day."

Was there not, indeed, a sense of guilt, and a true need of forgiveness?

HERE is an example of humility: An Indian who had been converted and had commenced preaching, upon being asked how much he was paid, replied, "Fifty cents for each sermon." "That's mighty poor pay," said his friend. "Yes," said the Indian, shaking his head, thoughtfully, "but mighty poor preach."

Taming Three Wild Girls.

BY GEORGE MAY POWELL.

I HAD been invited by the superintendent of a city mission Sabbath-school to visit the school for the purpose of making them an address at the close of the session.

As I came early, he almost timidly asked me if I would teach a class of three girls. He seemed to think a small class, and one made up of members having a decided reputation for being wild, might appear to me to be undesirable in the beginning, and unsatisfactory in experience. I cordially accepted the offer, remembering that an audience of *one* was often deemed sufficient for the Master; also, that he came to save the lost. Therefore there seemed more chance to do the Master's work, and do it in his way, by taking a small class of wild girls than a large class of tame ones.

I took the leader in hand first. In reply to my query if "she had studied her lesson," she replied, with a saucy mixture of the sullen and the defiant in her style, "No, I haven't time. I have too much to do to take care of the baby, and other work."

I replied with sympathy for her assumed overwork, and suggested that Sabbath-school lessons were to help us find the way to a land of light and beauty, where people were never tired or troubled, a land which I hoped she would reach some day. By this time the two others were prepared to answer more politely. None of them, however, had learned the lesson.

I then had them read the lesson over with me. It was the story of Naboth's vineyard. I next asked them to suppose that some poor little girl had come into the class who never even heard of the story, and each of them were to tell it to her in her own way and words. They all tried in turn, and did fairly well. I then told it in my way. I supposed that the father of one of them, though a poor man, had bought a cheap but pretty little home which same rich neighbor wanted to buy. Father would not sell, and mamma and the children were so glad that they laughed and cried by turns. The rich man's wife got some bad men to go before a judge, and got poor papa, who had done no crime, hung. Then the bad rich man and his worse wife got your nice little home. This story was to teach us what terrible things would grow out of wanting (or coveting) what didn't belong to us.

Returning to the idea of Sabbath-school being the place to learn how to get to the land where people were never cold, or tired, or hungry, or in tears, I suggested that some of our dearest friends were there now, that maybe some of them had dear little brothers or sisters there. By this time one or two of them were in tears, and all in sympathetic mood. The first thing to drive into the now softened hearts was studying how to get to the better land. They all said they had time late Sabbath afternoon to study the next Sabbath's lesson, and agreed to do so.

The field was now plowed and harrowed to sow the seed. They were urged not to reject Jesus by putting off deciding to serve him. The second-hand on my watch was shown them, with the suggestion that every second it ticked off in which they delayed was one of rejection. Prayer and the Bible as the weapons to help them fight the good fight after entering it were urged on as attentive hearts as I ever labored with. The wild girls were captured for the time, and we hope for eternity.

Opening and Closing Services for First Quarter of 1886.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. SILENCE.
II. THE DOXOLOGY.
III. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
SUPT. I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.
SCHOOL. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth.
SUPT. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
SCHOOL. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.
SUPT. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
SCHOOL. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night.
SUPT. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul.
SCHOOL. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.
IV. SINGING.
V. PRAYER.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.
II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.
III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, AND DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION, by the school in concert.
IV. REVIEW and APPLICATION OF THE LESSON, by Pastor or Superintendent.
V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.*
VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. SINGING.
II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.
SUPT. My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.
SCHOOL. Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.
III. DISMISSION.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

* Special Lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

FIRST QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

B. C. 444.] LESSON X. READING THE LAW. [March 7.

Neh. 8. 1-12. [*Commit to memory verses* 8-10.]

1 And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ez'ra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Mo'ses, which the LORD had commanded to Is'ra-el.

2 And Ez'ra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

3 And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

4 And Ez'ra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mat'ti-thi'ah, and She'ma, and An'a-i'ah, and U-ri'jah, and Hil-ki'ah, and Ma'a-se'iah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pe-da'iah, and Mish'a-el, and Mal-chi'ah, and Ha'shum, and Hash-bad'a-na, Zech'a-ri'ah, *and* Me-shul'lam.

5 And Ez'ra opened the book in the sight of all the people (for he was above all the people); and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

6 And Ez'ra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7 Also Jesh'u-a, and Ba'ni, and Sher'e-bi'ah, Ja'min, Ak'kub, Shab-beth'a-i, Ho-di'jah, Ma'a-se'iah, Kel'i-ta, Az'a-ri'ah, Joz'a-bad, Ha'nan, Pel'a-i'ah, and the Le'vites, caused the people to understand the law: and the people *stood* in their place.

8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

9 And Ne'he-mi'ah, which *is* the Tir'sha-tha, and Ez'ra the priest the scribe, and the Le'vites that taught the people, said unto all the people, This day *is* holy unto the LORD your God; mourn not, nor weep. For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law.

10 Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for *this* day *is* holy unto our LORD: neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the LORD is your strength.

11 So the Le'vites stilled all the people, saying, Hold your peace, for the day *is* holy; neither be ye grieved.

12 And all the people went their way to eat, and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them.

General Statement.

In the face of difficulties apparently insurmountable, Nehemiah accomplished his purpose of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. In fifty-two days after the first stone was laid the wall was finished, and the gates swung upon their hinges. The ruler then called together a great assembly of the people to worship God and listen to the reading of his law. The people came, not only from within the city, but from all the villages in the province. They met in the open square at the southern entrance to the temple inclosure, a vast company of men, women, and children. A platform had been erected, upon which stood the chief men of the land, the priests, and the appointed interpreters. In the midst stood Ezra, the priestly scribe, who had come from the East several years before Nehemiah with the purpose of effecting a religious reformation. As he opened the parchment roll, the entire assembly first stood, and then prostrated themselves upon the ground, in token of reverence for the sacred word. Then began the reading. The priest read a brief portion in the ancient Hebrew tongue, and then paused, while the Levites on either side gave the explanation, partly a translation into a more modern form, partly a paraphrase, and partly an application. For six hours the service was continued, for the people were eager to know the contents of their sacred books, and the message came as a revelation. Its first effect was to awaken the conscience, and loud cries arose as the listeners realized how unfaithful they and their fathers had been to the ancient covenant. But the Levites quieted their sorrow by telling them that this was a day of rejoicing and not of grief, when God's word was revealed to them. On that day began a new era in the history of Judah, an era of Bible-study and of renewed loyalty to the faith of the fathers.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. All the people. This was a gathering of the people from all Judea, on the Jewish new year; both as an anniversary, and a celebration of the newly completed wall. **As one man.** There is an impressiveness and moral power in a multitude assembled for religious service. In every age revivals of religion have attended large convocations of worshipers. (1) *Hence we should seek to bring all the people to God's house.* **Into the street.** Rev. Ver., "the broad place." It was an open park on the declivity known as Ophel, just south of the temple precincts. **Before the water-gate.** A gate leading to the subterranean reservoirs under the temple. **They spake.** That is, by their rulers, who had called the meeting. **Ezra the scribe.** The greatest character in the later history of the Jewish people, called "the second founder of Israel." He was a priest, and a student in the law, who had come to Jerusalem by royal appointment thirteen years before Nehemiah, and wrought great reforms among the people. He is believed by the Jews to have, 1.) Instituted "the great synagogue" at Jerusalem; 2.) Edited, arranged, and settled the canon of the Old Testament; 3.) Introduced the use of the Chaldee characters in place of the obsolete Hebrew; 4.) Written, partly from ancient documents, the Books of Chronicles and Ezra; 5.) Established synagogues for worship and the reading of the law. After this he returned to Chaldea, where his tomb is still shown at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. **The scribe.** The scribes arose after the captivity, when the prophets began to fail, and the people turned toward the written law. They were of various ranks, the highest being interpreters and teachers of the Scriptures, the lowest mere copyists and writers. As a class, they were held in high respect, but in later years they grew proud and arrogant, well deserving the censures which they received from our Lord. **The book of the law.** Probably not only the Pentateuch, but with it others of the Old Testament Scriptures, which Ezra was then engaged in arranging. (2) *We should be like these ancient Jews, eager to read and understand the word of the Lord.*

2. Ezra the priest. He was descended from Hilkiah, who had been high-priest in the reign of Josiah. **Brought the law.** The sacred writings, being in manuscript only, were very scarce and valuable, and only on great occasions brought before the people. So it was in the Middle Ages. In 1300 A. D. a Bible cost the wages of a working man for thirteen years; now eight Bibles can be bought by one day's labor. (3) *Are we grateful enough for having a Bible in every house?* **Both of men and women.** The Hebrews were in advance of all other Oriental nations in the respect which they paid to their wives, though even they were below the standards of Christianity, which has elevated woman from a slave to a companion. **Hear with understanding.** Children of an age to listen intelligently, (4) *Let us bring the children with us to worship God.* **The first day of the seventh month.** This was "the feast of trumpets." Lev. 23. 24; Num. 29. 1-6. A New Year celebration, as this month, the seventh of the ecclesiastical year, was the first of the civil year. It corresponded nearly with our October. (5) *It is well to begin the New Year with the reading of God's word.*

3. He read therein. It was not a bound volume, but a number of manuscript rolls, kept in a case. Each book formed a separate volume, with two rollers between which the pages were shown by being unrolled upon one and rolled upon another. **From morning until midday.** It was a service of six hours' length, and impressive from its picturesque surroundings, the rank and importance of those who conducted it, the multitude of listeners, and from the sacredness of the volume now brought forth from the selection of ages. (6) *How great may be the effect in after years of the memory of attendance during childhood upon God's house!* **People were attentive.** So in the dawn of the Reformation, all Europe was eager to hear and to read the Bible, for, as in Ezra's day, copies of it were scarce. In England, when the "Great Bible," newly translated by royal authority, lay upon its desk chained to a pillar in each cathedral, the people gathered in throngs, stood for hours on the stone floor listening to the reader, and when he paused, cried out, "Read on! read on!" (7) *Let us cherish a deep interest in the word of God.*

4. Upon a pulpit of wood. Literally, "a tower;" probably a raised platform upon which the reader could be seen and heard by the multitude. **Beside him stood.** These thirteen persons were perhaps the priests then employed in the temple service. They added to the moral influence of the service by their presence, and perhaps by turns relieved Ezra in the reading. Their names alone remain, but the influence of their work lives. (8) *The leaders of society should sanction the services of religion by their presence.*

5. Opened the book. Unrolled the scroll. **All the people stood up.** The multitude had been sitting on the ground, in Oriental manner; but all arose as a sign of reverence for the word of God. The ancient Jews would not tread upon a scrap of paper, lest it might contain the name of the Lord. (9) *Let us handle God's book carefully, and never misuse a copy of it.*

6. Ezra blessed the Lord. Gave thanks, perhaps repeating a psalm of praise. **The people answered.** The whole congregation testified their concurrence with the prayer and praise. (10) *The public worship should not be a spectacle, but a service in which all should participate.* **Amen.** A Hebrew word meaning "firm," or "be it so;" adopted as the affirmation of prayer. **Lifting up their hands.** This was an ancient custom in worship. Psa. 63. 4; 1 Tim. 2. 8.

7. Also Jeshua, etc. These were Levites who assisted in the service. It is uncertain whether they stood by the reader and gave the explanations by turn, or whether they were stationed at distances through the crowd, thus dividing it into Bible classes, and all teaching simultaneously. **Caused the people to understand.** The old Hebrew in which Ezra read was obsolete, as Chaucer's English would be to an audience at the present, and these Levites acted as interpreters, rendering it into the Chaldee, which was at that time the dialect of Palestine. They also explained the more difficult passages. (11) *There is no nobler work on earth than that of causing people to understand God's word.*

8. So they read. This verse, the Golden Text of our lesson, states just what should be the aim of every Sunday-school teacher. And it should be the aim of every preacher also. A young minister once asked an old Christian for his counsel concerning the best way to make his preaching effective. He answered promptly, "Read Nehemiah 8. 8." **Distinctly.** This refers to the audible, clear tone of the reading. **Gave the sense.** This refers to the explanation.

9. Nehemiah. See notes on the last lesson. **Tirshatha.** This is the Persian title for "governor." It is equivalent to "Your severity," or "Dread sovereign." **This day is holy.** The first day of the seventh month was to be observed as a sabbath. **Mourn not, nor weep.** Hence it appears that the ancient Sabbath was not considered as a day of solemnity, but of gladness. (12) *We should make God's day cheerful and happy.* **All the people wept.** The contrast between their own conduct and the demands of the law, as well as its threatened penalties, awakened their alarm and convicted their conscience.

10, 11. He said. Nehemiah is here referred to. **Eat the fat.** The fat pieces of flesh, considered the best. **Drink the sweet.** The new, sweet wine. **Send portions.** In their own joy they were to remember the poor, and supply their wants. (13) "*God's bounty should make us bountiful.*" **The joy of the Lord is your strength.** That is, the joy and peace which spring from reconciliation with God are the signs of spiritual strength. **Hold your peace.** They were not forbidden to regret their sins, nor to think of them, but to mar the gladness of the holiday by manifestations of sorrow.

12. Went their way. To their homes. **To make great mirth.** Not in drunkenness and riot, but in glad worship of God. **Because they had understood.** What a cause of joy it should be to any people when they know clearly what is God's will!

HOME READINGS.

M. Reading the law. Neh. 8. 1-12.
Tu. The law described. Psa. 19. 1-14.
W. The place for the law. Psa. 40. 1-11.
Th. Thinking of the law. Josh. 1. 1-9.
F. The law fulfilled. Rom. 5. 1-21.
S. The end of the law. Rom. 10. 1-10.
S. The royal law. James 2. 1-26.

GOLDEN TEXT.

So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. Neh. 8. 8.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 297.

How precious is the book divine,
By inspiration given!
Bright as a lamp its doctrines shine,
To guide our souls to heaven.

It sweetly cheers our drooping hearts,
In this dark vale of tears;
Life, light, and joy it still imparts,
And quells our rising fears.

This lamp, through all the tedious night
Of life, shall guide our way;
Till we behold the clearer light
Of an eternal day.

TIME.—444 B. C. Fifty-two days after the arrival at Jerusalem the wall was done. This service followed. 83d Olympiad. Year of Rome, 309.

PLACE.—Jerusalem.

RULERS.—Same as Lesson IX, except that Nehemiah is governor of Judea.

CONNECTING LINK.—Nehemiah's prayer gives him boldness to address the king in behalf of his countrymen. The king hears and sends him with royal authority to execute the desire of his heart. Facing opposition, overcoming his enemies, he finishes the work, and institutes the service of which we study.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The authority of the word.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. A Great Congregation, v. 1.
Who composed the great congregation?
What was the purpose of their gathering?
What similar gathering to hear God's word can you recall?
What part of the word of God was read on both these occasions?

2. A Bible Reading, v. 2-8.
Were any persons present at this service besides Jews? ver. 2.
What was the character of the audience?
What respect did they show to the speaker and the word?
What occurred besides the reading of the law?
Can you recall another scene where thousands were gathered to hear the law expounded by the world's greatest teacher?

3. A Day of Gladness, v 9-12.
Why did the people weep at the words of the law?
What did these leaders teach as the true way to keep holy day?
What saying of our Lord, preserved by Paul, was proved by these people on this day? Acts 20. 35.
What should be the spiritual condition of the one who truly understands God's word?
What does Paul declare that the kingdom of God is? Rom. 14. 17.

Practical Teachings.

Devotion to God's word brought joy to the hearer.
The true reading of God's word ends in—
1. Contrition for sin.
2. Joy over salvation from sin.
3. Beneficeat works of gratitude and love.
4. Quiet attention to personal duty.

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. A Great Congregation, v. 1.
Where did the people assemble?
Upon whom did they call?
What did they desire of him?

2. A Bible Reading, v. 2–8.
Who came together to hear the reading?
How long did the reading continue?
How did the people listen?
Where did Ezra stand?
How many were with him on the platform?
How did the people show their reverence for the law?
What was done before the reading began?
Who assisted in explaining the law? v. 9.
What was one of the duties of the priests? Lev. 10. 18.
In what manner was the reading done?

3. A Day of Gladness, v. 9–12.
What important personage was present with Ezra?
What advice was given to the people?
How had the reading affected the people?
What token of gladness were they to give?
What was the reason of their joy?
What obedience was rendered by the people?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Reverence for the word of God? 2. Carefulness in the reading of the word? 3. To rejoice in the understanding of God's law?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Where did the people gather together? **In the street before the water gate.**
What was the water gate? **The gate through which water was carried into the temple.**
Why did they come together? **To celebrate the feast of the trumpets.**
What did they ask of Ezra? **To hear the law of Moses.**
What did he do? **He brought the book of the law and read it.**
How long was he reading it? **From daylight till noon.**
Where did Ezra stand while reading? **Upon a pulpit of wood.**
Who were with him? **Priests and Levites, who explained the law to the people.**
How did the people listen? **With reverence and close attention.**
How was the law read and explained? **Distinctly and clearly, so that every one understood it.**
Why did the people weep? **Because of their sins.**
What had sin brought upon them? **Sorrow and punishment.**
What did Ezra and the priests tell the people? **"Weep not, the day is holy unto the Lord."**
What should they do? **Keep the feast with joy.**
For what reason? **Because God had forgiven them.**
What is the joy of the Lord? **The happiness that comes from doing his will.**

Words with Little People.

If you would like to know the very words GOD used when he told Moses to read the law mentioned in the GOLDEN TEXT, you can find them in Deut. 31. 10–13. Notice what he said about the children. God wants you to listen very attentively whenever his word is read or taught to you, and to study it for yourselves. If you do this you will find it to be a lamp lighting the path that leads to heaven.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. For what purpose did Nehemiah gather the people in Jerusalem? **To hear the law of God?**
2. Who read the law? **Ezra the priest and scribe.**
3. Who listened to the reading? **All who were old enough to understand.**
4. What is said of the reading in the GOLDEN TEXT? **So they,** etc.

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

An Old Testament Sunday-School.

I. ITS TIME.
On the first day of the seventh month. v. 2.
"A sabbath....a holy convocation." Lev. 23. 24.

II. ITS MEMBERS.
1. *All the people....as one man.* v. 1.
"Read this law before all Israel." Deut. 31. 11.
2. *All that could hear with understanding.* v. 2,
"Teach them diligently unto thy children." Deut. 6. 7.

III. ITS TEXT-BOOK.
The book of the law. v. 1.
"Search the Scriptures." John 6. 39.

IV. ITS SUPERINTENDENT.
They spake unto Ezra the scribe. v. 1.
"Had prepared his heart to seek the law." Ezra 7. 10.

V. ITS TEACHERS.
Levites caused the people to understand. v. 7.
"The priest's lips should keep knowledge." Mal. 2 7.

VI. ITS OPENING SERVICE.
1. *Ezra opened the book.* v. 5.
"Not depart out of thy mouth." Josh. 1. 8.
2. *All the people stood up.* v. 5.
"Stand up and bless the Lord." Neh. 9. 5.
3. *Ezra blessed the Lord.* v. 6.
"I will bless the Lord at all times." Psa. 34. 1.
4. *People answered....lifting up their hands.* v. 6.
"Lift up our heart with our hands." Lam. 3. 41.

VII. ITS LESSON STORY.
1. *They read in the book....distinctly.* v. 8.
"Teach them diligently." Deut. 6. 7.
2. *Gave the sense.* v. 8.
"They shall teach Jacob thy judgments." Deut. 33. 10.

VIII. ITS EFFECTS.
1. *All the people wept.* v. 9.
"We have not kept the commandments." Neh. 1. 7.
2. *The joy of the Lord is your strength.* v. 10.
"Let them....that love thy name be joyful." Psa. 5. 11.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Reading the Bible.

1. God's word is given to men that it may be read and followed as a guide in life. The sailor in an unknown sea consults his chart; so should we consult the Bible. More than one ship has been lost by striking upon a rock not laid down in the chart, but every danger is warned against in this guide-book.

2. The Bible should be read publicly, in assemblages for worship. Its place upon the desk indicates the honor that it should receive.

3. It should be read by all the people, old and young, rulers and commons, ministry and laity; for all need its golden precepts, and all will be helped by them.

4. It should be read as a whole, in continuous sections, a book at a time. The best view of Washington is from the dome of the capitol; of Boston, from Bunker Hill monument; so we need to take a landscape view of Bible truth.

5. It should be read distinctly, and carefully, and reverently, as God's message. When a Japanese officer sees the signature of the Mikado, he falls prostrate before it. We should treat with reverence a message from our King.

6. It should be read with careful study and explanation, to give the sense, and not to interject a meaning into it. We need, not the opinions of men, but the mind of the Spirit.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

THIS is a lesson on the Bible. We shall find the Bible possessed by the Jews at the time of which this passage speaks, or at least the first five books of it, mentioned ten times in the fifteen verses, four times as the "book," or "book of the law," five times as the "law," and once as the "words." It is not, however, the Bible in its authorship, its character, or its claims, that is the subject of the passage, but the Bible in its use; and the lesson we are to learn from it is what to do with the Bible.

The returned Jewish exiles who had left their homes in the foreign land, and come back to settle in their own country, in spite of its desolation and degradation from its former position, had undergone a long period of affliction and reproach from the enemies who surrounded them. Until the coming of Nehemiah, Jerusalem had lain waste. But now the work begun in that quiet chamber in "Shushan the palace," the work begun in prayer and carried on with prayer, was completed, and in the seventh month the people gathered together as usual to keep the feast of that month on a larger and more imposing scale than they had previously done. And the chief feature of this gathering as related in the passage was the use of the Book.

A series of graphic pictures may be drawn from the passage—the large concourse by the "water gates," the worship, the attention, the weeping, the comforting; then the festivities at home (ver. 12); the second assembly; the crowds going forth to the Mount of Olives, coming back laden with green boughs; and, woven in with these, the teacher will find a sevenfold pattern to set before the class.

1. *The Jews blessed God for the Book.* This was because they recognized whence they got it. We buy our Bibles cheap, or we get them given to us, and know there are plenty more to be had. But what if the Bible had never been written? We might have had histories and essays and tales and poems; but without the inspiration of God there could have been no book of God, no sure word from him. Those Bibles in the hands of the class are God's gift to each one. Has God been thanked for them? When Ezra opened the book and all the people stood up and said "Amen," with uplifted hands to his words of praise, and then worshiped God with their faces to the ground, the sight and the sound must have been truly imposing. But God looks at the heart. He is as well pleased with the true and earnest thanks of the Sunday scholar as with the grand chorus of praise. If each one thanked God for the book, there would be a greater blessing on it.

2. *They read it.* From morning to midday the reading went on, the Levites probably taking it by turn; and so the next day and during the seven days of the Feast of Tabernacles. Verse 18. If you make a valuable present to a friend, you do not want empty thanks for it; you want to see it used, not put away and forgotten. The Bibles that never come out except on Sundays or when the lesson has to be looked up, can their owners really care much about them?

3. *They explained it.* It is supposed that the Jews, who since the captivity spoke a mixed language, their own and that of their conquerors blended into one, were not familiar with the original Hebrew, in which the law was written, and needed, therefore, to have it interpreted by those who were more learned. Our classes have the Bible in their own tongue, yet many of the expressions are strange to them, many of its references to history, geography, ancient custom, etc., are unintelligible without explanation. The teacher is endeavoring to do what Ezra and the Levites did, to give the sense, and make the reading plain and easy.

4. *They listened attentively to it.* In such a large assembly, gathered together in the open air, there might be much to attract the roving eye, and we know very well that when the eye is wandering the ear is not taking in much. But the Jews had come to hear; and instead of looking about them, and observing and commenting upon their neighbors, "the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law." What a difference it would make could this be said of the class!

5. *They wept over what they heard.* The law that was read contained the record of God's mercies to them as a nation and of their own unfaithfulness. It showed them how they had sinned. It was as a looking-glass giving a true picture of themselves. The Bible does this now for every one of us. It would be a happy thing if each one in the class were to look into this mirror and read his own heart and life in it. It would cause mourning indeed. But let us remind our classes of the Lord's word: "Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh." Luke vi, 21. To discover that you are a lost sinner may seem very wretched, but it is the beginning of true joy. So it was with the Jews.

6. *They rejoiced that they had understood the words.* There were comfort and hope for them as well as condemnation in the book of the law. Such promises as those in Deut. 30, and at the end of the Song of Moses (Deut. 32. 43), might well cause rejoicing. The Bible is the book of good news. But the reason so few rejoice in it is because

so few weep over it. Unless you have wept and rejoiced, you have not really "understood the words." But there was one thing more:

7. *They obeyed it.* Finding the command of God concerning the Feast of Tabernacles, they at once set to work to carry it out. And the result was "very great gladness." Ver. 17. Such is always the ultimate result of obeying the dictates of Scripture.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Describe the walls of Jerusalem, as rebuilt by Nehemiah....Draw a map of Jerusalem, and show the "water-gate," where the events of the lesson took place....The lesson may be presented as in the Analytical and Biblical Outline. "An Old Testament Sunday-school." Note 1.) That it was held on Sunday, "the first day of the seventh month;" 2.) That all the people were included in it, either as teachers or scholars: 3.) Its text-book was the Bible; 4.) Its superintendent was Ezra, an earnest worshiper, a godly man, and a thorough Bible student. Notice his peculiar fitness for the place; 5.) Its teachers were godly men and Bible scholars; 6.) Its exercises, taken from the story; 7.) Its aim, to give clear understanding of God's word; 8.) Its results, conviction of sin, and the joy of acceptance with God....See in the explanatory notes some good illustrations of incidents connected with the Bible.

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Verse 9: The Tirshatha, 383. Ver. 10: Sending portions, 384.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

9. Lord, we come before thee now.
85. Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire.
89. How precious is the book divine.
90. Break thou the bread of life.
91. Now let my soul.
92. Thy word, almighty Lord.
97. Wonderful words.

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God in His Word.*

Introduction. Recall last lesson: Nehemiah's love for his country, his desire to work for the Lord, and his faith that God would make a way for him to work. Tell that the king's heart was opened to Nehemiah's request, and that when he went to Jerusalem, the hearts of the people were opened, so that they were willing to work with him. Explain why a wall was needed around the city, and tell how wicked people tried to hinder the Jews from building it; show that God always helps those who are working for him. Tell how the faithful Jews worked, so that in fifty-two days the wall was finished, and the wicked men saw that it was God's work, and that they could not hinder it.

THE GREAT MEETING.

Tell that Nehemiah called a great meeting before he went back to Persia, to hear the law of God read. Ask what the law of God is, and hold up Bible to show where we may find it. Show picture of a roll, such as was used in that day, or, still better, have imitation of such a roll for children to see. Speak of the advantage we have, in each being permitted to have a Bible of our own. Tell why there were so few copies of the law in those days, and read God's command to the people to hear it read, from Deut. 31. 10–13. Notice that God mentions the children, and gives the reason why they should hear the law. Make the scene in the street vivid, by bringing out details. These will be suggested by reading and thought.

SORROW AND JOY.

Tell that the people wept when they listened to the law, because they could look back and see how often they had broken it. Show that it is a serious thing to disobey God. Nehemiah and Ezra comforted them because they saw that they were truly sorry for their sin, and real sorrow for wrong-doing leads us to break it off, right away. Impress the reality of the fact that God speaks to us in his law.

Lessons for us. The Bible is God's living word to us. Show that the words are just as true now as when first spoken. Read some sweet promises, and teach that these are the sweet which we may drink. Show that we must reach out for it, and tell ways in which children may do this by careful attention in church and Sunday-school, etc. Impress the thought that we can only take "the sweet" by turning away from sin.

Blackboard

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

EXPLANATION.—This design is intended as an application of the lesson after its review, or study. Ask a few leading questions, such as these: "Of what value is God's law to me?" "Why does not every body value it alike?" "Why is it that some care for it not at all?" An answer to these questions is made by writing the name of *Christ* in the heart. With Christ in the heart, God's word is a lamp that lights our path to heaven. Without Christ in the heart, the Bible is only a book unheeded. It will be of no avail, when we appear before the judgment-seat of God, to make excuse that we knew not the law. It is our duty to study it, and understand it.

GOD'S WORD IS OUR
LAW,
INSTRUCTOR,
GUIDE,
HELPER,
TEACHER.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

What did you say? A great conference in Jerusalem? Yes, notice the people thronging the street before the water-gate. What a vast concourse of men, women, fathers, mothers, children, all pouring into the space

before the water-gate! There is Ezra, an older man by thirteen years than when he came to Jerusalem's broken walls, but the same upright, reverent, godly leader. You can see him over in that "pulpit of wood," facing the multitude, while on either side are grouped men honored in Israel. Ezra is opening the precious book of the law of Moses. He has turned back the sacred scroll, and the people are rising. What a solemn invocation of the great Jehovah! And all over the assembly, what a deep, impressive response, "Amen, Amen," the people raising their hands to heaven! And now, with faces prostrated in humility, they worship God. Such a serious, heart-searching hour, a heart-searching even for hour after hour, Ezra's assistants lighting up the meaning of the Word, the people solemnly listening. They begin to weep. All over the assembly there is a breaking into sobs. No, no, this day is for joy. Joy is holy. And dismissed with this assurance, we watch the people breaking up and separating to their homes, there to remember the poor, and there to celebrate God's goodness in great and even holy joy.

B. C. 474.] **LESSON XI. ESTHER'S PETITION.** **[March 14.**

Esther 4. 10-17, and 5. 1-3. [*Commit to memory verses* 1-3.]

10 Again Es'ther spake unto Ha'tach, and gave him commandment unto Mor'de-cai;

11 All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden scepter, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days.

12 And they told to Mor'de-cai Es'ther's words.

13 Then Mor'de-cai commanded to answer Es'ther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews.

14 For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this?

15 Then Es'ther bade *them* return Mor'de-cai *this answer*,

16 Go, gather together all the Jews *that are* present in Shu'shan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law; and if I perish, I perish.

17 So Mor'de-cai went his way, and did according to all that Es'ther had commanded him.

1 Now it came to pass on the third day, that Es'ther put on *her* royal *apparel*, and stood in the inner court of the king's house, over against the king's house: and the king sat upon his royal throne in the royal house, over against the gate of the house.

2 And it was so, when the king saw Es'ther the queen standing in the court, *that* she obtained favor in his sight: and the king held out to Es'ther the golden scepter that *was* in his hand. So Es'ther drew near, and touched the top of the scepter.

3 Then said the king unto her, What wilt thou, queen Es'ther? and what is thy request? it shall be even given thee to the half of the kingdom.

General Statement.

In chronological order this lesson belongs to a period about thirty years earlier than the last, and to the reign of the Persian king Xerxes, the predecessor of Artaxerxes. Xerxes, called in the Bible Ahasuerus, after his disastrous war with the Greeks, gave himself up to the pleasures of his palace. A nobleman named Haman gained great influence over him, and secured an edict ordering the utter destruction of the Jews in the capital and throughout the kingdom. The reason given for this cruel decree was the hate of Haman toward one Jew, Mordecai, who had refused to show him honor. But we can well believe that in the Jewish traits of that time were the same elements which have in every age and in every land made the Jews objects of persecution, so that Haman was not alone in his enmity. It was a dark day for the chosen people, and sounds of wailing arose around the palace wall. There were two facts, however, of which Haman was ignorant. One was that

in the palace was a queen of that Jewish race, Esther the beautiful; the other, that on the throne of high heaven sat One who had chosen this despised race to play an important part in earth's history, and man cannot thwart God's plan. Queen Esther heard of the impending destruction of her kinsmen. In the palace, and the favorite of the king, she was safe if she would only conceal her relationship with the condemned people. But to her they were the people of God, and she was prouder of her honor as a daughter of Abraham, and heiress of the covenant, than as queen of Persia. At the suggestion of Mordecai, whose faith shone like a star in the darkness, she resolved to go in boldly to the king, even at the imminent risk of death, and avow herself one of the people whose destruction had been decreed, and plead for their lives. Her plan was successful, her people were saved, their foe perished amid the wreck of his plot, and the name of Queen Esther gained an everlasting honor.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 10. Again Esther. She was the descendant of Jewish exiles, living in Persia, though long after the restoration by Cyrus. Her Jewish name was Hadassah, "myrtle;" her Persian name Esther, "star." She was not only surpassingly beautiful in appearance, but lovely in character, and won friends in every condition of life. Out of a multitude of maidens she was chosen as one of the wives of King Ahasuerus (Xerxes), and was called "queen," though it is doubtful whether that was her true rank in the court. In the palace she retained her affection for her cousin and foster-father, Mordecai, and obeyed his counsels. **Hatach.** The name of the eunuch or attendant who waited upon Esther, and through whom she was able to communicate with Mordecai, who was not permitted to enter the part of the palace where the women lived. **Gave him commandment.** A message to Mordecai, in answer to the appeal which Mordecai had sent, for her to go to the king and entreat for the lives of her people. **Mordecai.** A Benjamite, descended from Kish the father of Saul, who lived at Shushan or Susa, and was connected with the court. After the fall of Haman, he became prime-minister. He has been identified with a certain Matacas, a eunuch of great influence during the later years of Xerxes.

11. The king's servants. The officers of the court. **People of the king's provinces.** The entire population of the empire. **Do know.** The law of which she speaks was one widely known, and is referred to by various secular historians, that no person was permitted to come unbidden into the presence of the king of Persia. **Unto the king.** Xerxes, called in this book Ahasuerus, the despot who invaded Greece with five millions of men, and returned with scarcely as many thousands. He was fond of pleasure and of show, but had no capacity for government, and was utterly selfish and unprincipled. His character in secular history fully matches the account in this book. **Into the inner court.** The palace of Xerxes at Persepolis, which was undoubtedly of the same general order with that at Susa, has been discovered. Its ground-plan was of four great rooms, of which the one in the rear was "the inner court," where the king sat for the transaction of business. **There is one law of his.** Rev. Ver., "one law for him," that is, for the one who enters unbidden. **To put him to death.** The kings of Israel often appeared in public, and were accessible to their subjects; but those of Media and Persia were kept in seclusion and surrounded with mystery, as if lifted above humanity. Only the highest nobles ever saw the face of the monarch. So deep was this seclusion that an impostor personated Smerdis, the son of Cyrus, and reigned in his name six months before the fraud was discovered. **The golden scepter.** In all the sculptures the king of Persia is represented as holding a slender rod, in some reliefs painted red to represent gold, and in length about equal to his own height. **These thirty days.** Perhaps indicating that the king had grown indifferent to her, and might refuse to see her if she sent a request for admission to his presence. (1) *Our King welcomes all, and inclines his ear toward the weakest of his people.*

12, 13. They told to Mordecai. Perhaps the message which Esther gave to Hatach was by him intrusted to some friend of Mordecai. **Then Mordecai.** The grief and alarm of Mordecai at the edict of the king was not for himself, but for his people, whom he regarded as God's own, and the inheritors of the covenant. **Think not with thyself.** Esther, having kept her nationality a secret, might selfishly hope to escape the general slaughter. But Mordecai reminded her that she belonged to the condemned race, and some jealous rival might therefore obtain her destruction.

14. For if thou. Mordecai, with the insight of faith, saw God's hand in Esther's opportunity, and desired her to go boldly into the presence of the king and plead for the lives of her people. **At this time.** The time for which God had raised her up, and the time when her services were in deepest need. (2) *Every life has opportunities which may be employed to aid God's cause.* **Enlargement.** Literally, "breathing room," freedom from restraint. **Arise to the Jews.** Mark the magnificent faith of this man, condemned to death! He has no doubt that in some way God will intervene to save his people, and is only concerned that Esther shall enjoy the privilege of deliverig them. (3) *Faith trusts in God under a dark heaven.* **From another place.** (4) *The failure of one agent will not thwart the great purposes of God.* **Thou and thy father's house.** He believed that one who failed to measure up to such a sublime opportunity could not remain unpunished. (5) *Neglect is as great a crime as wrong-doing.* (6) *The selfish life is sure to defeat its own purposes.* **And who knoweth.** Mordecai perceived that each link in the chain of circumstances by which the Jewish maiden became a queen was forged by an almighty hand for the accomplishment of an all-wise purpose. What was true of Esther is true of each and every person. (7) *Every well-lived life works out some divine plan.* **Such a time as this.** The greatest hour in Esther's life, the hour for which she was born, was not that when the crown-royal was placed upon her brow, but that hour when she stood forth to save others. (8) *Success in life is not in gaining but in blessing.*

15, 16. Esther bade them. It may be that her faith needed not this stirring exhortation from Mordecai; or it may be that this appeal aroused her to her noble deed of self-devotion. **Gather together all the Jews.** The Jews have always shown a fondness for city-life, and were probably quite numerous in the capital, since the Persian kings had shown them special favors. **Shushan.** One of the four capitals of the Persian empire, situated in the province of Elam, north of the Persian Gulf. It is supposed to have been founded as early as the time of Abraham; was the principal residence of Xerxes; and is now a mass of ruins, called *Sus*. **Fast ye for me.** Though prayer is not mentioned, yet it undoubtedly accompanied the fasting, and was the most important part of the service. **Three days.** This may mean, as in other places of Scripture, not three whole days, but until the third day, that is, for a day and a half. **I also and my maidens.** The reference to her maidens is suggestive of the influence which Esther obtained over all around her—king, eunuchs, and attendants. **Will fast likewise.** This shows that she relied more upon the power of God than upon the charms of her person, which might suffer from the fast. **So will I go in.** In her words note, 1.) Decision; 2.) Patriotism; 3.) Courage; 4.) Self-sacrifice; 5.) Faith. (9) *Teacher, impress this noble example upon your class!* **Not according to the law.** This was one of the instances when the law of man conflicts with the law of God. Our duty is then to obey the higher law, and abide by the consequences without a murmur. **If I perish, I perish.** The utterance, not of despair, but of resignation. Hers was a dangerous mission, to enter into the presence of the king uninvited, to request the rescinding of a law which according to Persian custom was unalterable, to confess herself a member of a despised and condemned people, and to oppose a powerful favorite.

17. So Mordecai went his way. He could easily send word to the Jews in Shushan, for, according to Oriental usage, their homes were all in one quarter of the city. **Did according.** The service of prayer probably took place in some place of meeting, which about this time began to be known as a *synagogue*, or assembly for worship.

1. On the third day. After the fast with its religious exercises was over. **Put on her royal apparel.** That her charms might be heightened by every possible

aid, and the king might immediately look upon her with favor. **Stood in the inner court.** In her see the picture of a soul in the relation of prayer toward One who is a more just and gracious King than was the Persian despot. **Upon his royal throne.** Not a lofty seat, but a chair having a footstool in front. It was either made of gold or covered with it, and was kept sacred for the king's use. **Over against the gate.** There was a great square court, with rooms on each side, and beyond it the throne-room, from which the king could see all who approached.

2. She obtained favor. All his slumbering love awoke, and he welcomed her approach. **Held out.... the golden scepter.** He gave her the sign of favor which thrust back the hands of the guards who stood ready to arrest and slay every intruder. (10) *There are no barriers in the way of our approach to the King of kings.* **Touched the top.** As a mute expression of gratitude for the king's kindness in sparing her life.

3. What is thy request? She showed tact in not at once presenting her petition, but in preparing the way by the banquets. Still, there was the request in the background, as the king well knew. **To the half of the kingdom.** We read in Herodotus that Xerxes once promised to grant to a favorite wife any petition which she would proffer, without even this limitation. Esther's prayers were answered, she saved her people, and gained for herself a deserved renown.

HOME READINGS.

M. Esther's petition. Esther 4. 10–17; 5. 1–3.
Tu. The danger to the Jews. Esther 4. 1–9.
W. The petition favored. Esther 5. 4–14.
Th. The banquet held. Esther 7. 1–10.
F. The favor of man. 1 Kings 11. 1–13.
S. The favor of God. Psa. 30. 1–12.
S. Life for the perishing. John 3. 14–21.

GOLDEN TEXT.

So will I gó in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. Esther 4. 16.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 869.

I'll go to Jesus, though my sin
Like mountains round me close;
I know his courts, I'll enter in,
Whatever may oppose.

Perhaps he will admit my plea,
Perhaps will hear my prayer;
But, if I perish, I will pray,
And perish only there.

I can but perish if I go;
I am resolved to try;
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die.

TIME.—474 B. C. 74th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 321.

PLACE.—Shushan, or Susa.

RULERS.—Xerxes, called in Scripture Ahasuerus, king of Persia. Annual archons ruling in Athens, consuls at Rome.

CONNECTING LINK.—While the Jews in Palestine were living in peace, those dispersed throughout the Persian Empire were exposed to great danger, from the revengeful spirit of Haman, a noble at the court of the king. He induced the king to order the slaughter of all the Jews in his dominions. They were saved from their enemies through the prayers of Esther, the queen, who was a Jewess.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—Faith.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Message of Faith, v. 10–14, chap. 4.
Where was the scene of this story?
What had happened to occasion the message of Esther to Mordecai?
What light is thrown on the character of the Persian monarchy by this lesson? 1. The kind of monarchy? 2. Woman's position in it?
Is Esther's message a refusal to go to the king?
What does it show as to her state of mind?
What effect had Mordecai's message of faith to her?

2. The Resolve of Faith, v. 15–17, chap. 4.
In what beautiful words does our Golden Text show this resolve?
Who did Esther feel were as important in the service she was to perform as she was?
What effect would this united prayer have upon the people themselves?
In the New Testament what instance of united prayer delivering from great peril?
How is the doctrine of faith and works as taught by James shown here?

3. The Power of Faith, v. 1–3, chap. 5.
What is the picture presented by these verses?
What must be the result of this presence of Esther, unsummoned, in the inner court?
Who must we believe was present, though unseen, besides Esther, the court, and the king?
What special instance is cited by the apostle James of the power of the prayer of faith?

Practical Teachings.

The court of the earthly king was unapproachable to Esther unless called. The court of the heavenly King is open to all.
The place one occupies in the world is to be used for furthering God's work. Complete submission to God's will won the day for Esther.
How does all this apply to you?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Message of Faith, v. 10–14, chap. 4.
To whom did Esther send a message?
Of what law of the palace did she remind Mordecai?
What exception was there to this law?
Why did Esther hesitate to enter the palace?
What message of rebuke did Mordecai send to the queen?
What would follow her refusal to see the king?
What question did Mordecai ask?

2. The Resolve of Faith, v. 15–17, chap. 4.
What request did Esther make of Mordecai?
What did she procure for herself and maidens?
What was her resolve?
What attention did Mordecai pay to her request?

3. The Power of Faith, v. 1–3, chap. 5.
How long did Esther fast?
Whose presence did she seek?
What preparation did she make?
Where did she find the king?
What sign of favor did the king show her?
What did Esther venture to do?
What was the king's question?
What was the king's promise?
What other king made a like promise? Mark 6. 23.

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where, in this lesson, are we taught—1. Faith's test? 2. Faith's sacrifice? 3. Faith's reward?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What cruel law was made by the king of Persia? **That all the Jews in his kingdom be put to death on a certain day.**
What did the Jews do when they heard it? **They mourned in sackcloth and ashes.**
Who was the king's queen? **Esther, a Jewess.**
Did the king know she was a Jewess! **No.**
Who sent a copy of the king's law to Esther? **Mordecai, her cousin.**
What did he want her to do? **To ask the king to spare the lives of her people.**
What was Esther's reply? **That she might lose her own life in so doing.**

Why did she thus reply? **Because every one that entered into the presence of the king without his permission was put to death.**

Who only were spared? **Those to whom the king held out his golden scepter.**

Of what was this a sign? **Of his mercy.**

What word did Mordecai send the queen? **That she might be killed as one of the Jews.**

What request did Esther make of him? **To ask all the Jews to fast for her three days.**

What did she promise? **To see the king.** (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)

How did the king receive Esther? **With favor.**

What did he promise? **To grant any request she might ask of him.**

Words with Little People.

There never need be one bit of fear in your hearts to go to *your King* and ask him for whatever you want.

Queen Esther was *willing* to lay down her life for her people. (See the GOLDEN TEXT.) Who *gave* his precious life for you?

"You may be the *smallest* of those who love him,
The *weakest* of those who pray,
But if *you come* as he has bidden,
He *never* will say you Nay."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Esther? **A beautiful Jewess, the queen of Persia.**

2. From what did she save her people, the Jews? **From death by their enemies.**

3. How did she save them? **By asking the king for their life.**

4. What words of Esther are given in the Golden Text? **"So will I,"** etc.

5. What was the result of her prayer to the king? **The Jews were spared, and their enemies slain.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Two Examples in Character.

I. THE EXAMPLE OF MORDECAI.

1. **Trust in God.** "*Enlargement....arise.*" v. 14.
   "In perfect peace....stayed on thee." Isa. 26. 3.
   "He is my refuge." Psa. 91. 2.
2. **Fear of God.** "*Thou....be destroyed.*" v. 14.
   "He that believeth not....damned." Mark 16. 16.
   "He that loveth his life shall lose it." John 12. 25.
3. **Spiritual Insight.** "*For such a time as this.*" v. 14.
   "I girded thee....hast not known." Isa. 45. 5.
   "Faith....the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11. 1.

II. THE EXAMPLE OF ESTHER.

1. **Love of God's People.** "*Gather....all the Jews.*" v. 16.
   "We are sold, I and my people." Esther 7. 4.
   "Choosing....to suffer with the people of God." Heb. 11. 25.
2. **Prayer.** "*I also ...will fast.*" v. 16.
   "Praying always with all prayer." Eph. 6. 18.
   "In every thing by prayer and supplication." Phil. 4. 6.
3. **Courage.** "*So will I go in.*" v. 16.
   "Be strong and of a good courage." Josh 1. 8.
   "Fear not them which kill the body." Matt. 10. 28.
4. **Self-sacrifice.** "*If I perish.*" v. 16.
   "Greater love hath no man than this." John 15. 13.
   "Lay down our lives for the brethren." 1 John 3. 16.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

Esther as a Type of Christ.

The Old Testament is a shadow to which the New is the substance. The stories of the Old Testament are intended to illustrate and foreshadow events in the New. Esther stood to prepare the Jewish mind for a revelation of Christ. Thus—

1. When God's people were in danger, a deliverer was divinely provided. God foresaw the plot, and prepared for it. So God saw sin before it came into the world and planned to meet it by a Redeemer from sin.

2. Just at the point of danger, in the palace itself, was found the deliverer, by a plan unexpected both by friends and foes. So God's salvation is the way which men can scarcely comprehend, and by a Saviour who comes from the right hand of God himself.

3. The deliverer of the Jews was a royal personage, on the throne and lifted high above all danger. So Christ is the Son of God, the Prince of the house of David.

4. The deliverer of the Jews offered herself voluntarily to die for her people in coming to the king, and with her people in avowing herself one of them. So the Son of God came to earth, and gave himself to die for us.

5. The deliverance of the Jews was through an intercessor who was the only person in the kingdom capable of standing between the king and the condemned people. Christ, our intercessor, is one with God, yet one with us.

6. The intercession of Esther was successful, and her people were saved. Whether Christ's intercession shall avail for us depends only upon the question whether we will accept his pleadings in our behalf.

English Teacher's Notes.

WHEN we hear of any difficult task which has been accomplished, any threatening danger which has been safely passed, any perilous enterprise which has been triumphantly carried out, the question at once comes up with some eagerness, How was it done? And this is particularly the case if we see any probability of finding ourselves in similar circumstances. We then feel, not merely a curious interest in the matter, but a desire to know all about it for our own profit. It is interesting and exciting to read how Hannibal crossed the Alps in the teeth of opposition; but it touches ourselves more nearly to learn how a teacher succeeded in managing an unruly class; how a mother in straitened circumstances contrived to make both ends meet; how a young man overcame the disadvantages of humble birth, or of an unprepossessing exterior; how a girl triumphed over weak health or obscure position. The story of Esther combines several points of interest. It is the story of a queen, and yet of a feeble woman; the story of one who played a heroic part, and yet of one who shrank from peril; the story of one who was instrumental in effecting a mighty deliverance, and

yet who was called upon only to do the plain and simple duty that lay before her.

First let us notice what she had to do.

Esther's duty. One would have thought nothing very great or momentous would have fallen to her lot to undertake. She bore, indeed, the name and dignity of queen, but, in spite of her royal position, she lived in a sort of gilded captivity. Even without the testimony of ancient history to corroborate it, the Book of Esther gives a sad picture of the condition of women at that time, and the low esteem in which they were held. Though the wife of the Persian monarch, Esther was little better than a slave, and her sphere of usefulness must have appeared an extremely limited one. Yet there was a great duty for her to fulfill. Her kinsfolk, her nation, were in peril. If any one could speak the word that should save them, it must be Esther; the position she occupied gave her this opportunity, and the man who stood to her in the place of father pointed it out, and enjoined upon her its performance.

Esther's danger. Mordecai was, perhaps, hardly aware how great a burden he was laying upon his adopted daughter. She who had been chosen queen by Ahasuerus might be supposed to have some influence over him. But the fact was that for a whole month he had neglected her, and she could not tell whether or not his partiality was waning. She had no opportunity of seeing or speaking with the king, unless she ventured upon a bold step, and presented herself, uncalled, before his royal seat. The penalty of such an act, unless special favor were shown her, was death, and she had no good reason for imagining it would be remitted in her case. Unless her husband's affection revived, there was no hope for her. The queen was as much subject to the "law of the Medes and Persians" as any in the empire, and the story of Daniel shows how true was the description of it, that it "altereth not" (Dan. 6. 8, 12, 15; chap. 1. 19), so that it was not merely a difficult task that lay before Esther, but a duty fraught with the utmost peril.

Now notice how she did it.

Esther's decision. "*So will I go in unto the king.*"

The duty must be performed; the danger must be faced; how should it be done? What should be her panoply and her strength? She knew of but one. Humanly speaking, she expected to perish, but there was a Power that could protect and prosper her. To that Power she would have recourse. We miss in Esther that simple unswerving faith of others whose lives are recorded in Scripture. The name of the God of Israel is not even mentioned. But when an Israelite spoke of fasting, it implied humiliation before his God, and the seeking of divine help. This was the only armor of strength on which Esther could rely. "Fast ye for me, . . . I also and my maidens will fast . . . and so will I go in unto the king." She had not David's faith ("The Lord . . . he will deliver me," 1 Sam. 17. 37), but at least she cast herself upon God, and thus went forth to the task laid upon her.

Esther's deliverance. There sits the despot on his loyal throne, and Esther stands before him, dressed in queenly apparel, as befitted her station. But her strength lay neither in this nor in her beauty, but in the panoply of lowliness and humiliation before God, with which she had clothed her soul. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will" (Prov. 21. 1); and the golden scepter is held out to the bold intruder, for this time Esther is delivered—an earnest of the deliverance of her people, which it is given her to accomplish.

This is how the task was performed and the danger passed. The same panoply, the same weapons, will carry the feeblest and most trembling over the path of danger, and crown their efforts with success. Let the class take this thought away with them. It is not station, or talent, or strength, or wisdom, or human courage, but humble clinging to God, that wins the day. He that casts himself as nothing before God, and on God, goes forth mighty.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Let the teacher read carefully the Book of Esther, induce his scholars to do so if possible, and either tell, or better draw from the class, the story of Queen Esther. ....Show the map, or draw one, and locate "Shushan the palace," or Susa, the capital of Persia. Let the class understand that the scene of this story is not laid in Jerusalem or Judea....There are four persons presented prominently in this book. It might be well to call attention to the traits of character displayed by each—Ahasuerus, the man of pleasure; Haman, the unscrupulous and selfish office-holder; Mordecai, the man of faith; Esther, the self-sacrificing, like our Lord.... Every body admires beauty—wherein did Esther's beauty consist? Not merely in her face, which was an index to her soul. See in the Analytical and Biblical Outline her traits as an example....Call attention to Esther as a type of Christ. (See Thoughts for Young People.)....A man was asked how he obtained a certain high office under government. "O, I have a friend at court," was his answer. We, too, have a Friend who pleads for us with the King of kings.

References. FREEMAN. Chapter 4—Verse 11: Etiquette of the Persian Court, 395. Chapter 5—Verse 1: The courts of the house, 387. Verse 2: Scepters, 576.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

211. The child of a King.
165. What a Friend we have in Jesus.
45. Though troubles assail, etc.
72. I sing of his mercy.
117. There is a Friend.
137. Look up.
169. Arise, my soul, arise.
186. The Lord will provide.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT: *The Kindness of Our King.*

INTRODUCTORY. Most children know the story of Queen Esther, and in approaching its beautiful lessons we may depend upon them for the outlines of the story. Question skillfully, calling now upon a child, now upon

a class and again upon the whole class, for answers, and so avoiding the danger of letting two or three forward children do all the talking while others settle back into indifference, or worse, because not helped to tell what they know.

THE QUEEN'S TROUBLE.

See if children remember how so many Jews came to be in Persia; also in what they differed so widely from the Persians. Tell that Esther was a Jewess, and had been taught to pray to the true God, but her husband, the king, did not know or care for God. Tell how sad the queen was when she knew that all her people were to be killed on a certain day, and why she thought she could do nothing to save them. The laws of Persia were very strict, and even a queen might not disobey them without suffering death, unless the king should hold out his golden scepter to her. That meant love and pardon.

THE QUEEN'S COURAGE.

Tell that when Esther resolved to go into the king's presence without being called she knew that she might lose her life, but she believed that God wanted her to do it, and that he would go with her. Tell what preparation she made, and teach that when we have something to do that looks hard and dangerous we must always pray to God about it, and get wisdom and strength from him. Esther knew that God was a greater king than Ahasuerus, so she went to him first.

THE QUEEN'S JOY.

Describe Esther going from the presence of the King of heaven to the presence of the proud king of Persia. Tell what it meant when he held out his scepter to her, and read the kind words he spoke to her. He was willing to give her whatever she asked, even if she asked the half of his kingdom!

Our King's Kindness. Teach that our king, Jesus, asks us to come to him for any thing we want. He holds out the scepter of pardon and peace to every one who comes asking his favor. Read some promise, as "Whosoever will, let him come," and tell that it is our king's invitation. Who will come? Sing, "Come to Jesus."

Lesson Word-Pictures.

A shadow is sweeping over Shushan. It reaches that home whose opened door you see. It enters, hushes the merry song there, and you hear only the sharp, sudden wail of a mother and her children. The shadow touches that man at his work. He starts, drops his tools, goes home and clothes himself with sackcloth as with the night, and puts coarse, gray ashes on his head. Sackcloth and ashes cannot enter the royal palace, but still that shadow has gone there. It has stolen past all the guards and fallen over the queen herself. What does she care for all the magnificence of Shushan's palace, its pavements of red and blue and white and black marble, its gorgeous hangings like the drapery of a rainbow, its stately pillars, its vessels of gleaming gold, its couches of purple, its gardens bright with the colors of the sunrise? That shadow falls every-where, darkening all things. Amid all this splendor, as through the unreality of a dream, glides the doomed queen. This is the shadow of death. She and her people must die. They are Jews. Only one person can save them, and that is the great king. Will she venture before him and plead for life? It is death to go if not summoned, death unless he holds out the golden scepter to any suppliant. "I will go" is the thought of the queen. "Let my people pray for me." Not only sackcloth and ashes now, but fasting and prayer in the homes of the Jews. A great cry is going up to God, from the queen also and her maidens. The day has come when the queen will venture before the king. She puts on her royal robes. Amid all that glory of color, her beautiful face with its dark, lustrous eyes and its wealth of raven hair is like a jewel in some rich setting. Alone, she walks the marble-paved corridors on her way to the king's court. She goes with bowed head. She feels the sunlight; it chills her like the winter moonlight. She hears the birds singing; it is a mockery to her, this queen on her way to death. She has reached the inner court of the king's house. She enters and with beating heart stands waiting. There on his throne sits the king. Of what splendor is he the center! That magnificent throne, those walls bathed in rich colors, the guards in their shining uniform, and O with what sharp, cruel swords! Does the king see that some one has entered, unsummoned, an intruder, a woman? Between those sharp swords and that woman's neck is only the golden scepter. Will he lower it? Does he delay? Is he angry? Is it a scepter of gold in a hand of iron that will not bend? Still, she waits, resolute with all the patience of a last hope. "If I perish, I perish," she has said. Still she waits. Perhaps, he does not see her. Yes, Esther, he sees you. And the scepter! She has only eyes for that. Ah, not a hand of iron, but that of thine husband, a hand of love, wields it! The scepter droops. In all her royal beauty, past stately pillar and pictured wall, over the marble pavements, before the very guards, marches the queen and touches the tip of the lowered scepter.

Blackboard.

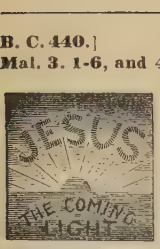
BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

EXPLANATION. We have studied and read to-day of a king whose pride was such that none could approach him unbidden under penalty of death. Our blackboard illustrates the difference between Queen Esther's king and our King of kings. The way to his court is open, and any one of us may come boldly to the throne of grace, trusting in—what? Esther had faith, and she entered the king's court, also trusting in—what?

DIRECTIONS. If you have colored chalk, place this diagram on the board before the school assembles, and divide the words, by writing all on the left of the down lines in one color, and on the right with another color. When the question is asked, In what do we trust? write the answer in the open way. Make the words, "*The way to king's throne*," all in one color, so that it will connect with the word written.

B. C. 440.] LESSON XII. MESSIAH'S MESSENGER. [March 21.

Mal. 3. 1-6, and 4. 1-6. [*Commit to memory verses* 3. 1–3.]



1 Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.

2 But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he *is* like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap:

3 And he shall sit *as* a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Le'vi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness.

4 Then shall the offering of Ju'dah and Je-ru'sa-lem be pleasant unto the LORD, as in the days of old, and as in former years.

5 And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers, and against the adulterers, and against false swearers, and against those that oppress the hireling in *his* wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and that turn aside the stranger *from his right*, and fear not me, saith the LORD of hosts.

6 For I *am* the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Ja'cob are not consumed.

1 For, behold, the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the LORD of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.

2 But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall.

3 And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do *this*, saith the LORD of hosts.

4 Remember ye the law of Mo'ses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Ho'reb for all Is'ra-el, *with* the statutes and judgments.

5 Behold, I will send you E-li'jah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD:

6 And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.

General Statement.

All that can be known of Malachi, the last of the prophets, must be deduced from his brief prophecy, for he is not elsewhere mentioned in the Scripture. The word Malachi means "my messenger," and it is not certain whether it was his name, or the designation of his office. Some have thought that he preached at the time when Ezra was engaged in the work of reformation, and Nehemiah in that of the political reorganization of the Jewish people. But in that case it is hard to explain why one so prominent as the inspired prophet of the epoch is not mentioned in either the Book of Ezra or of Nehemiah. It seems more likely that he lived a few years later, when the reformation had lost its spirit, but retained its forms. The services of the temple were duly fulfilled, but in a perfunctory, formal spirit. The people were outwardly worshipers of God, but in heart were living for selfish aims. They were robbing his altar of its due, and were heaping their store-houses with what belonged to God. In this age of hypocrisy and hollow service arose Malachi. His message was a rebuke for the sins of the time, and a call to a more hearty and faithful service. Every class of the Jewish nation shares in his condemnation—priests, scribes, rulers, and common people. But his preaching was not altogether a protest against evil. He points out the path of duty, and promises God's blessing upon faithfulness to the covenant. He proclaims the coming of One who shall restore Israel to its former glory. The advent of the forerunner, who was to appear with all the suddenness and severity of an Elijah, was soon to be followed by the advent of One greater, who was to be the King himself, refining the precious metal of the nation, and casting away the base. In the coming dawn the Sun of Righteousness should arise, bringing life and healing and peace with his outstretched wings. Thus does the Old Testament end with the promise of the New.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. My messenger. This is a prediction of John the Baptist, as shown by its appropriation in Mark 1. 2. **He shall prepare the way.** In the East a forerunner goes in advance of every important personage, to clear the road, and make preparation for his coming. (1) *What John the Baptist was, every preacher and teacher should be now, the Lord's messenger.* **And the Lord.** This is a reference to Christ; but in this prophecy the first and the second coming are blended, as is often the case in the prophetical writing. Time and space are very small elements in the dramatic action of the prophets. **Whom ye seek.** This is equivalent to "whom ye are expecting." All the Jews were looking for the Redeemer's coming, though they were not ready to accept him when he came. **Shall suddenly come to his temple.** He came to his temple in his expulsion of the money-changers (Matt. 21. 12. 13), and again in the destruction of Jerusalem, A.D. 70, an event often referred to in the New Testament as the coming of the Lord. **Even the messenger of the covenant.** The margin of the Revised Version reads, "the angel of the covenant," which is the name under which Christ revealed himself more than once in the Old Testament history. **Whom ye delight in.** There is "a latent irony" in this. The Jews theoretically held to the doctrine of Christ's coming as a most precious truth; but practically they ignored it. The same may be said of the attitude of the bulk of the Christian Church toward the promised second coming of Christ.

2. But who may abide. This evidently foretells the work of Christ in his incarnation, which was to sift out the true from the false in the Israel of his day. **The day of his coming.** Here as elsewhere the results of the first and second advent are presented together. This was Augustine's comment on this prophecy. **Like a refiner's fire.** To distinguish the precious from the vile and separate between the silver and the dross. **Like fullers' soap.** The fuller was the washer or laundry-man of ancient times. Soap was unknown, but a substance of cleansing property was in use. (2) *May we be ready to receive the cleansing touch of the Saviour!*

3. He shall sit as a refiner. In the East the refiner sits before his little crucible, keeping his eyes on the metal, which remains exposed to the heat until it reflects his image. (3) *So the great Master keeps us in the furnace until we become like himself.* **Purify the sons of Levi.** The Levites are named because as the priestly tribe they were the leaders in the religious life of Israel. **An offering in righteousness.** No offerings are acceptable to God except those that come from a righteous heart; but the blackest sinner who sincerely seeks for such a heart can have it.

4. Then shall the offering. The word here used for "offering" is not that denoting an atonement or sacrifice, but that which means a thank-offering or a gift of consecration, the worship of one who is in a state of reconciliation with God. **Be pleasant unto the Lord.** The offering of a wicked and unfaithful people is refused (Isa. 1. 11–15); but when the evil are purged out from among the good, then the sacrifice becomes acceptable. So it is now. When we are reconciled to God, then our devotions are received with favor. **As in the days of old.** Such were the sacrifices of Abel, Noah, Abraham, Samuel, and David in the old dispensation, and such the prayers of saints under the Gospel.

5. I will come near to you to judgment. Before God can accept his people he must judge them by holding them up to the true standard and casting out the unworthy elements. The evils which the prophet here names are still prevalent, and still hinder the progress of God's word. **The sorcerers.** There were in the ancient days, as there are now, mediums, who claimed to talk with departed spirits. Both ancient and modern forms of spiritualism consist of fraud and diabolism in about equal proportions. In all ages this sorcery has led people astray from God and the word; and it invariably corrupts the moral natures of those who practice its observances. It is suggestive, to find the prophet warning against sorcery and adultery in one breath. The lives of most modern spiritualists give all the commentary needed on this passage. **Against the adulterers.** One of the sins of that time, as we see in

the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah, was the marriage of Israelites to the heathen, which would inevitably have destroyed the holy seed and blotted out the knowledge of God if it had not been repressed with a strong hand. **Against false swearers.** This refers to those who bear false witness against men for gain, rather than to blasphemers against God. There were fraudulent business men in those times, who made false returns of property, and cheated the government, and robbed the Church; just as some of like spirit do now. **Those that oppress the hireling.** Employers who ground down their employees, took advantage of their poverty, underpaid and overworked them, and sometimes defrauded them of their wages. **The widow, and the fatherless.** Desolate as widows must be under any conditions of society, in the East they are especially helpless. (4) *Those whom men can most readily wrong have a great avenger.* **Turn aside the stranger from his right.** The *stranger* is the foreigner, not belonging to the chosen people. While the Israelites were forbidden to marry with such, unless they first renounced their idols and accepted Jehovah, they were equally forbidden to oppress or wrong them.

6. I am the Lord, I change not. His unchangeableness is implied in his name *Jehovah*, which means, "He who is," the existent one. **Therefore ye.... are not consumed.** There is a double meaning in this verse. To one class of Jews God declares that he changes not in his hate of their sins, and therefore they shall not escape punishment; to another, that he changes not in fidelity to his covenant, and therefore, they, the true **sons of Jacob,** are preserved amid all the dangers that threaten them. (5) *God's unchangeableness is at once the hope of the good and the terror of the evil.*

1. That shall burn as an oven. So John the Baptist warned the Jews of the sifting and the burning which the Messiah should accomplish. **All the proud.** In the Old Testament this word generally means those who live for themselves without thought of God. **Shall be stubble.** And as such, destroyed in the fire. **Neither root nor branch.** Such expressions as these are doubtless figurative, but they mean something, and something terrible to the godless.

2. Unto you that fear my name. See the contrast between "the proud," or those who live without God, and those who hold his name in reverence. **The Sun of righteousness.** The Saviour, who is to the moral and spiritual world what the sun is to the material. (6) *Like the sun, Christ brings light which is life to men.* **Healing in his wings.** The beams of the sun are here compared to the outstretched wings of a bird. **Grow up as calves of the stall.** Rev. Ver., "gambol as calves." The reference is to the freedom and enjoyment of God's people, which should resemble that of young animals; a comparison which would naturally suggest itself to a pasture-keeping race.

3. Ye shall tread down the wicked. This carries on the illustration of the previous verse. God's people shall not only enjoy freedom, but triumph over all the evil forces of the world; a prophecy to be realized in the full success of the Gospel. **Ashes under the soles of your feet.** No more regarded than the ashes upon which men walk. Even now God's people enjoy in a measure the privileges of this prophecy, for the Gospel is now growing to rule in the world. The powerful nations are Christian nations, the missionary is protected, and evils which once were rampant are now held in check.

4. Remember ye the law. The age of the later prophets was marked by an increasing reverence for the law of Moses. **Which I commanded.** Thus the last of the Old Testament prophets declares that the law came from God. **In Horeb.** The mountain on which the law was proclaimed is sometimes called Horeb, though more often Sinai.

5. I will send you Elijah. That is, one who should be like Elijah in character and mission. The reference is to John the Baptist, who though not the literal Elijah (John 1. 21), came in the spirit and power of the great reformer. **The great and dreadful day.** This seems to point to that time when the Jewish state was destroyed, and the Jews forever driven from their home.

6. The heart of the fathers. The *fathers* are the godly ancestors of the Jewish people; the *children* are their degenerate and worldly-minded descendants of Malachi's day. Before Messiah can come these must be brought into harmony by the people coming back to their ancient standards. **Smite the earth with a curse.** The last utterance of the Old Testament is the warning of a curse to fall upon the disobedient; the last sentence in the New Testament is a gracious benediction.

HOME READINGS.

M. Messiah's messenger. Mal. 3. 1-6 ; 4. 1-6.
Tu. The messenger sent. Luke 1. 57-80.
W. Preparing the way. Luke 3. 1-22.
Th. The refiner of souls. Matt. 3. 1-17.
F. Offerings to God. Matt. 2. 1-15.
S. Vengeance upon the wicked. James 5. 1-15.
S. Fear of God brings reward. 2 Pet. 1. 1-21.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me. Mal. 3. 1.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Humnal, No. 810.

Go forth, ye heralds, in My name,
Sweetly the Gospel trumpet sound ;
The glorious jubilee proclaim,
Where'er the human race is found.

The joyful news to all impart,
And teach them where salvation lies ;
With care bind up the broken heart,
And wipe the tears from weeping eyes.

Be wise as serpents, where you go,
But harmless as the peaceful dove ;
And let your heaven-taught conduct show
Ye are commissioned from above.

TIME.—440 B. C. In Greece, the 84th Olympiad. Year of Rome, 313.

PLACE.—Jerusalem. (?)

RULERS.—Artaxerxes, king of Persia.

CONNECTING LINK.—Malachi lived in the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, or immediately after them. He was the last of the prophets, and the last lesson of this quarter points us to the Messiah, whose life begins with the first lesson of the new quarter.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The way of salvation.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Coming Messenger, chap. 3. 1 ; chap. 4. 5, 6.
What announcement does our Golden Text contain ?
What was to be the work of this messenger ? chap. 4. 6.
What testimony did the Saviour give that this prophecy had been fulfilled ?
How did John the Baptist meet the conditions of this prophecy ?
When did the Saviour do what was predicted in chap. 3. 1 ?

2. The Refining Fire, chap. 3. 2-6 ; 4. 1.
What was the condition of the Jewish people when Christ came ?
What was the effect of his teaching on the Pharisees?
Against whom did he pour out bitter denunciations ?
What is the effect of a refiner's fire ?
What has been the effect of Christ's teaching upon the world ?
What does Christianity do for society ?
What shall be the final end of wickedness ?

3. The Sun of Righteousness, chap. 4. 2-4.
What was the effect of Christ's coming upon those who received him ? ver. 2.
What was the progress of Christianity like in its early centuries ? ver. 2.
What is to be its destiny in the world ?
In the struggle between holiness and wickedness, which is to triumph ? ver. 3.
Upon what foundation is Christianity laid ? ver. 4.

Practical Teachings.

Christ really has come into the world. His temple is the human heart. Has he entered it ?

Trials refine us if we are silver. They destroy us if we are dross. What do they do to you ?

The sun cannot shine if clouds are between him and the earth. Can the Sun of righteousness ?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Coming Messenger, chap. 3. 1; chap. 4. 5, 6.
What promise did God here make to his people?
What was to be the business of the messenger?
By what name is this messenger called in chap. 4. 6?
Of whom was he to be the herald?
In whom was this promise fulfilled? Matt. 11. 10.
What other prophet foretold this messenger? Isa. 40. 3.
What is promised of his ministry?

2. The Refining Fire, chap. 3. 2-6; 4. 1.
What was to be the manner of the coming of the Lord?
What two questions does the prophet ask?
To what is the Lord likened?
From what would he purify his people?
What will be the end of the wicked?
Against whom would the coming Lord be a witness?
What kind of offering is acceptable to God?

3. The Sun of Righteousness, chap. 4. 2-4.
Who have hope in the coming of the Lord?
What is it "to fear his name?"
What has Jesus declared himself to be? John 18. 12.
What does the Sun of righteousness secure to godly men?
What promise of spiritual prosperity is given them?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The need of the natural heart?
2. The final doom of the wicked?
3. The safety of those who fear the Lord?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was the last of the Old Testament prophets that foretold the coming of Christ? **Malachi.**
Whom did he say should prepare the way for his coming? **His messenger.** (Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.)
Who was his messenger? **John the Baptist.**
To whom is he compared? **To Elijah.**
In what was he like him? **In his teaching and way of living.**
What would the Messiah bring with him? **Punishment for the wicked and blessing for the good.**
What is Jesus called? **The Sun of righteousness.**
What does his light drive out of our hearts? **Sin and darkness.**
How does he come to us? **With healing.**
Healing for what? **For soul and body.**
Who only can cure us of sin? **Jesus.**
What will his light do for us if we let it shine into our hearts? **Make us strong and happy.**
What is the life of the earth? **Its sun.**
What would the earth be without it? **Cold and dark and dead.**
What is our life? **The Sun of righteousness.**
What are we without him? **Cold and sinful and unhappy.**

Words with Little People

God showed the prophet Malachi that John the Baptist was coming to make the way ready for Jesus four hundred years before it happened. [See the GOLDEN TEXT.]

If you tell to all around what a Saviour you have found, and *then*, by what you *do* and *say*, you *show* your love from day to day, you will be a little messenger for him, too.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Who was Malachi? **The last of the Old Testament prophets.**
2. What did he foretell? **The coming of the Saviour.**
3. What did he say in the Golden Text? **"Behold, I will,"** etc.
4. Who was meant in this? **John the Baptist.**
5. What did Malachi call the coming Saviour? **The Sun of righteousness,**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Coming of the Lord.

I. A CERTAIN COMING.
He shall come, saith the Lord. 3. 1.
"This same Jesus... shall so come." Acts 1. 11.

II. AN EXPECTED COMING.
The Lord, whom ye seek, shall....come. 3. 1.
"Even so, come, Lord Jesus." Rev. 22. 20.

III. A SUDDEN COMING.
Shall suddenly come to his temple. 3. 1.
"Ye know not what hour." Matt. 24. 42.

IV. A COMING TO PURIFY.
Like a refiner's fire....shall purify. 3. 2, 3.
"Blameless in the day of our Lord." 1 Cor. 1. 8.

V. A COMING TO JUDGE.
Will come near you to judgment. 3. 5.
"Who shall judge....at his appearing." 2 Tim. 4. 1.

VI. A COMING TO DESTROY.
All that do wickedly shall be stubble. 4. 1.
"In flaming fire taking vengeance." 2 Thess. 1. 7-9.

VII. A COMING TO REWARD.
The Sun of righteousness....with healing. 4. 2.
"Shepherd shall appear....a crown of glory." 1 Pet. 5. 4.

VIII. A TRIUMPHANT COMING.
Ye shall tread down the wicked. 4. 3.
"He shall reign for ever and ever." Rev. 11. 15.

THOUGHTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

What Christ's Coming Brings to Men.

There is a time when Christ is revealed to every soul, and that is in a sense, but not in the full sense, his coming to that soul. This lesson shows what his coming brings to men.

1. His coming brings to many alarm and fear. 3. 2. There are those who dread to meet Christ, even though he comes to offer them mercy. A teacher said to his class, "How would you feel if you knew Christ were coming to this room now?" There was silence, until one scholar said, "I should want to go away!"

2. His coming draws the line between the precious and the vile, the silver and the dross, the good and the bad. v. 2-5. Now the evil and the good are mingled; but when Christ comes they will be separated, the sheep on one side, the goats on the other. On which side will you be found?

3. His coming shall make the good better and the Church purer. v. 2, 3. The silver and the gold shall be purified, the worship made more sincere, the offering of the Church more acceptable, by the coming of the Lord.

4. His coming shall bring judgment and punishment to the wicked. 3. 5-4. 1. People are not always seen in their true light now, but then their crimes shall be known and their penalty shall come.

5. His coming shall bring victory and triumph to his cause. 4. 2, 3. May we be permitted to share in that success!

English Teacher's Notes.

IN the constellation of Ursa Major, the "Great Bear," are two stars known by the name of the "Pointers." The eye that rests on the "Pointers" does not stay there; it travels on in the direction which they indicate. For these stars form a sort of guiding finger to point out one in the smaller constellation, Ursa Minor; they are an index to the

Pole-star, that by which of old, before the compass was known, the mariner steered his course over the trackless ocean.

Our lesson to-day is about pointers. A prophet is, emphatically, a pointer. He appears, not in his own name, but in the name of another. His business is not to bear witness to himself, but to another. And Malachi is one, in the very strictest and narrowest sense. He, alone of all the prophets, excepting Obadiah, has absolutely no personality. We are not told who he was or whence he came. His prophecy is entirely apart from himself. His name means "My messenger." He is just simply a messenger, or a pointer. And his book closes up the Old Testament by pointing to the advent of the long-looked-for Messiah, and indicating how he may be recognized when he comes.

But there is a second pointer. The word "Behold" occurs three times in the Book of Malachi, and in the passage for to-day. The first time it points to the forerunner of Christ: "Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Here is an expansion of Isaiah's prophecy: "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness," etc., whence both are quoted together in Mark 1. The one messenger, Malachi, announces the other messenger, John the Baptist, who was to be the immediate preparer of the way of the Lord, and who led the minds of the people away from himself to the Mighty One coming after him! Both point in the same direction, like the two stars in Ursa Major; but one is farther off, the other nearer.

To what do they point? The two stars ever revolving round the Pole point to the one star which, practically, as far as human sight is concerned, keeps its place steadily in the heavens and is therefore called the Pole-star. Just so with the two messengers. Malachi points out that the coming one is the Lord, one with Jehovah, the Lord who changes not. Ver. 6. And what does John say of him? "One mightier than I . . . the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose." Mark 1. 7. "He that cometh after me is preferred before me, for he was before me," the eternally existent, unchangeable I am. John 1. 15. The Pole-star retains its place, though stars appear, now east, now west of it, though planets circle round the heavens, though below the winds blow, this way and that way, and currents flow in this and that direction, and land appears and fades away again before the eye of the mariner. And he would be lost indeed if he guided his course by these ever-changing things. But there, where his compass points, there where the sky is not obscured by clouds, he can see the star which guided the sailor of old glittering in the heavens, serene and undisturbed, true and reliable. So Jesus Christ, the Lord, is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever." Kingdoms rise and fall, philosophy takes one aspect after another; the minds of men are drawn by opposite currents, first in one and then in the other direction; circumstances change and fling us first on this side, then on that side. But One never changes. "I am the Lord, I change not." Ver. 6. "With him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1. 17); and because he never changes, he is the sure Guide.

But how does He guide? It was a welcome sight to the sailor of old when the clouds parted and he beheld the never-erring Pole-star. And so the Jews looked for the coming of Messiah and were ready, as they supposed, to welcome him. He was to them "the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in." For, just as the Pole-star reveals the position of the Pole, so Messiah was the revealer and bringer of the covenant mercies of God. And so to some it is pleasant to hear of the Lord Jesus Christ as the merciful one, ready to forgive sins, providing a happy home in heaven. But there is another aspect of the matter. "Who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth?" The Pole-star may show the sailor that he has taken a wrong course, that he is in danger, that he has been speeding away from the goal and must return and go back over the path by which he came. And the sight of Christ reveals to the sinner his sin, his danger, his mistakes, his utter helplessness. He is like a refiner's fire; a "swift witness" (ver. 5) against all that is false and evil. He was this at his first coming when John the Baptist testified of him: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." Matt. 3. 12. He is this now, and we find in him not merely the merciful Saviour, but the rightous One, who cannot tolerate sin, so that we are told: "Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." 2 Tim. 2. 19. So will he be in that day to which Malachi calls attention with his second "Behold." Chap. 4. 1. And because this last fiery revealing will give no place for turning, the third "Behold" tells of a messenger to be sent "before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." Chap. 4. 5.

But, meantime, to those who have submitted themselves to be tried by the refiner's fire, the star which shone on them and pointed out the right course has become a "Sun of righteousness with healing in his wings," and for those who have steered by its light, instead of perplexed and weary wandering, there is leaping and prancing (said to be the more correct translation) "as calves of the stall." Chap. 4. 2.

Space will not allow of fuller entering into the details of the passage, nor the exact meaning of chap. 4. 5, which will, no doubt, be dwelt upon in other notes. The lesson to be impressed upon the class is this:

It is no longer night, as the time before our Lord appeared. There are thousands of "pointers" to him now. You have been pointed to him to-day—to him, the changeless One, the sure Guide. Are you ordering your course by this Star, and dwelling in the light of this Sun? God grant it may be so with each one who hears!

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Call attention to the time when Malachi preached, as indicated in his book....Show from this lesson the sins which were then prevalent, as 1.) Formality; 2.) Sorcery; 3.) Immorality; 4.) Swearing; 5.) Oppression of the poor; 6.) Neglect of God....Show how these same sins are characteristic of this age....Next, present the teachings of the lesson concerning the messenger, and show how the traits here named belonged to John the Baptist....Impress the truth that every teacher should be a John the Baptist, preparing the way for Christ.... Show also the aspects in which the coming of Christ is here presented, concerning which see the Analytical and Biblical Outline....How is the second coming of Christ foreshadowed in this lesson?....Present the requirements of this lesson upon the followers of God.... Also, the privileges of those who are on the Lord's side, especially as contained in the latter part of the lesson. ...."The light of the world is Jesus" might be sung, or repeated, in connection with chap. 4, ver. 2.

References. FREEMAN. Chapter 3—Ver. 1: The Herald, 866. Ver. 2: Fulling, 626. Chapter 4—Ver. 3: Treatment of enemies, 628, 869.

Songs from the Epworth Hymnal.

47. There's a wideness in God's mercy.
50. Joy to the world.
66. Crown him with many crowns.
126. Even me.
134. Love divine, all love excelling.
167. O could I speak the matchless worth.
209. Will Jesus find us watching?
210. Is my name written there?
222. When the King comes in.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

DIRECTIONS. With yellow chalk make the rays of light, which represent the wings of the Sun of Righteousness. Write the word "Redemption" in red. Make the sentence, "*Our Lord is here.*" quite prominent, so that it will impress itself on the minds of those who see it. We are not looking forward to the coming, four hundred years hence, of the Sun of Righteousness. He is here. Will you be healed? Will you be his messenger? Have you ever tried to prepare the way before him?

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Looking afar, through the mist of the centuries, the prophet beheld him, the messenger of the Messiah. He saw, too, the temple, and what glory filled it, as Messiah entered! The prophet saw him bending over the refiner's fire as he purified the nation. How the metal glowed! Then how it would cloud with the floating dross of sorcery, adultery, and fraud! How patiently the refiner skimmed the molten surface, till, we are told, he saw his face there, till it was beautiful with the reflection of his character. In the day of the Lord's coming, how hot the flames! The prophet, though, saw another light than that of the furnace, even the glory of the rising of the Sun of righteousness! "Nearer, nearer," all the heavens flushed with gold and purple seem to say. The light sharpens, till over the sea it breaks in glory, and "with healing in his wings," the Sun mounts the sky. And against the glory of that morning sky stands out in grandeur the form of the messenger, the great prophet Elijah.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God our Light.* Print "Malachi" on the board, and tell that he was the last of the Old Testament prophets. Ask what a prophet does, and show that his power to foretell future events must come from God, since the best and wisest of people cannot tell what will happen even one day ahead. To give some idea how far into the future Malachi saw, make four large arches on the board. Print "100 years" in each. Let children count. How long before Jesus came did Malachi live? Divide one of the arches into ten parts. Let some child who has lived ten years stand up. Thus help little minds to come at some idea of the long time between the utterance and the fulfillment of these words.

THE MESSENGER.

Call for Golden Text. Ask who came before Jesus, to tell the people of their sins, and to ask them to stop sinning because One was coming who was so holy that sin could not live in his presence? Read chap. 4, verse 1, and tell that the day is surely coming when all sin must be burned up, and this is what John the Baptist came to warn the people of. Tell that the Holy Spirit has been given to speak in every heart, to hold back from sin, and show that this is because God loves us so that he wants to save us from the sin that would destroy us.

THE MESSIAH.

Teach that the Messiah is another name for Jesus. To those who fear sin and look to God to be saved from it. The Messiah comes like the rising of the sun upon a dark world. Talk about darkness and light, and teach that the heart without Jesus is a very dark place. When Jesus comes, all is changed. Ill will, naughty tempers, wrong-doing of all kinds, go away, and there is "healing," cure for sin, in his coming. A heart on the board, with sun rising in it, and its rays reaching out beyond may help to impress the thought.

Lessons for us. Teach that when the Spirit of God comes to show us sin in our hearts we must turn to Jesus at once. Impress the truth that Jesus has come. We need not wait. The sun of love and peace will rise in any heart that wants and asks. Read the last verse of lesson, and teach that the heart in which Jesus lives will be a loving heart.

LESSONS FOR APRIL, 1886.

APRIL 4. The Word Made Flesh. John 1. 1–18.
APRIL 11. The First Disciples. John 1. 35–51.
APRIL 18. The First Miracle. John 2. 1–11.
APRIL 25. Jesus and Nicodemus. John 3. 1–18.

FIRST QUARTERLY REVIEW.

March 28.

HOME READINGS.

M. Lesson I. 2 Kings 22. 1–13.
Tu. Lesson II. Jer. 8. 20–22; 9. 1–16.
W. Lessons III, IV. Jer. 35. 12–19; 2 Kings 25. 1–12.
Th. Lessons V, VI. Dan. 1. 8–21; 3. 16–28.
F. Lessons VII, VIII. Dan. 5. 1–12, 25–28; Ezra 1. 1–4; 3. 8–13.
S. Lessons IX, X. Neh. 1. 1–11; 8. 1–12.
S. Lessons XI, XII. Esther 4. 10–17; 5. 1–3; Mal. 3. 1–6; 4. 1–6.

REVIEW SCHEME FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

[In studying this Review do not be content with just glancing over this Scheme. Absolutely master all that is required. Do the best studying you have done in this quarter. When thoroughly done, write out from memory alone, with no help from any source, the whole Review.]

1. Commit to memory the Titles of the lessons, so that you can repeat them rapidly, and without effort.

2. Do the same with the Golden Texts.

3. Do the same with the Outlines.

4. Do the same with all the names of men who figure prominently in the lessons.

5. Tell to which lesson the following incidents belong, giving with each answer the Title and Golden Text:

a. An old prophet clothed with a scarlet robe, and wearing a gold chain.
b. A king upon his royal throne, and a queen kneeling before him.
c. An old priest handing a dust-stained parchment roll to a young king.
d. A young man refusing to eat the food sent him from the table of his king.
e. A great out-door meeting in a great city, where the speaker read the Bible from morning to midday.
f. A king in chains of brass, blind, his last sight the death of his son.
g. Servants of a king lying dead upon the ground, killed by the heat of a burning furnace.
h. The cup-bearer of a mighty monarch asked by his king why he looked sad.
i. People singing, people shouting, people weeping before the foundation walls of a great building.

6. Tell what lessons are suggested by the following pictures, and give the Lesson Outline of each:

a. A prophet weeping, and crying, "The harvest is past."
b. A prophet singing—his song, "I will send my messenger."
c. A wine-cup empty, that has been untouched for several generations of men.
d. A man sitting refining silver.
e. A queen and her maidins bowing in fasting and prayer.
f. Four young men bending together over books of Chaldean lore.

7. What character, noted for his zeal to purify God's Church, in these lessons?

8. What character willing to risk life for the possible good of a whole people?

9. What character whose principle was total abstinence?

10. What character who polluted in a drunken feast the vessels of God's house?

11. What principles that tend to form good character are brought out by these lessons?

12. What principles that must result in bad character are also shown?

SEED THOUGHT.

"So teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."

REVIEW SCHEME FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

LESSON I. **Josiah and the Book of the Law.** 2 Kings 22. 1–13. What does the GOLDEN TEXT say of King Josiah? Over what kingdom did he reign? Why did he order treasure to be collected? What was found among the treasures? What did the reading of the law lead Josiah to see.

LESSON II. **Jeremiah Predicting the Captivity.** Jer. 8. 20–22; 9. 1–16.—What lost privileges are lamented in the GOLDEN TEXT? Why did the prophet lament? What was the crying sin of the people? What desolation was foretold?

LESSON III. **The Faithful Rechabites.** Jer. 35. 12–19. For what did the Lord rebuke his people? What example of obedience does he set before them? What had been God's message to his people? What heed had they paid to the message? What punishment was promised the disobedient? What reward to the Rechabites?

LESSON IV. **Captivity of Judah.** 2 Kings 25. 1–12. What king captured Jerusalem? Who was carried into captivity? To what place were they carried? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What was done to the captured city?

LESSON V. **Daniel in Babylon.** Dan. 1. 8–21.—What young men did the king of Babylon select from the Jewish captives? For what purpose? What did Daniel refuse? What was the reason for his refusal? What test did he undergo? What was the result? Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.

LESSON VI. **The Fiery Furnace.** Dan. 3. 16–28.—Who were condemned to the fiery furnace? What was their answer to the king? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What befell them in the furnace? Who was with them in their trial?

LESSON VII. **Handwriting on the Wall.** Dan. 5. 1–12; 25–28.—What warning came to a wicked king? Who failed to solve the mystery? To whom did the king finally appeal? What did Daniel declare the words to be? What was the divine verdict against Belshazzar? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON VIII. **The Second Temple.** Ezra 1. 1–4; 3. 8–13.—What Gentile king favored the rebuilding of the temple? What caused him to be interested in the work? How were the people aided in the building? How was the laying of the foundation celebrated? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON IX. **Nehemiah's Prayer.** Neh. 1. 1–11.—What sad tidings came to Nehemiah? How was he affected by the news? What did he do in his grief for the people? What is the prayer of every afflicted child of God? (GOLDEN TEXT.)

LESSON X. **Reading the Law.** Neh. 8. 1–12.—Who gathered to hear the reading of the law? Who was the reader? Who helped him? What was the manner of reading? (GOLDEN TEXT.) What was the reason of the great joy on this occasion?

LESSON XI. **Esther's Petition.** Esther 4. 10–17; 5. 1–3.—At whose request did Esther seek the king? Why did she hesitate about going? What was her final determination? (GOLDEN TEXT.) How was Esther's faith rewarded?

LESSON XII. **Messiah's Messenger.** Mal. 3. 1-6; 4. 1-6.—What is the prophecy of the GOLDEN TEXT? Who was Messiah's messenger? Whose coming did he herald? What title does the prophet give to the coming Messiah? To whom will his coming be a joy? To whom will his coming bring destruction?

REVIEW SCHEME FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Repeat the GOLDEN TEXTS for the quarter:

1. **He did that—**
2. **The harvest—**
3. **For unto this—**
4. **By the rivers—**
5. **Wherewithal shall—**
6. **Our God whom—**
7. **Thou art—**
8. **They praised—**
9. **Give us help—**
10. **So they—**
11. **So I will—**
12. **Behold I—**

LESSON I.—Who did right? **King Josiah.** What did he do in the twelfth year of his reign? **He opened and repaired the house of the Lord.** With what did God bless him? **With peace and prosperity.**

LESSON II.—Why were the people not saved? **Because they refused to turn to the Lord.** What did Jeremiah declare unto them? **The desolation of Jerusalem, and the captivity of the people.**

LESSON III.—Who obeyed their father's commandment? **The Rechabites.** For what did the Lord reward them? **For obedience to their father's law.** For what did he punish the Israelites? **For disobedience to the laws he had given them.**

LESSON IV.—Who carried the Israelites as slaves to Babylon? **King Nebuchadnezzar.** What did he destroy? **Jerusalem and the holy temple.** Why did sorrow and trouble come upon them? **Because they bowed down to idols.**

LESSON V.—Who among the Jewish captives lived in the king's palace in Babylon? **Daniel.** What did Daniel resolve in his heart? **To obey the laws of God.** What did he ask of the chief ruler? **That he might have pulse and water to eat and drink.** Why did he ask this? **The Jewish law forbade them to eat of meat killed by heathen.** With what did God bless Daniel? **With wisdom and learning.**

LESSON VI.—Who refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? **Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego.** What did Nebuchadnezzar do? **He had them cast into the fiery furnace.** Who was with them in the fire? **The Son of God.** From what did he save them? **From being harmed by the flames.**

LESSON VII.—What king made a great feast for his lords? **Belshazzar.** What frightened him in the midst of the feast? **A hand writing on the wall.** Who interpreted the strange words? **Daniel.** What did they mean? **That God had taken his kingdom from him.**

LESSON VIII.—Who helped the Jews to go back to their own land? **King Cyrus.** What did they rebuild? **The house of the Lord.** Who rejoiced when the foundations were laid? **The people.** Who wept? **The priests and the old men.** For what did they weep? **For the lost glory of the temple.**

LESSON IX.—What news came to Nehemiah? **That the Jews were poor and despised.** What was the state of Jerusalem? **It was without wall or gates.** What did Nehemiah do? **He prayed to the Lord for help.** What did he ask God to remember? **His promise to Moses.**

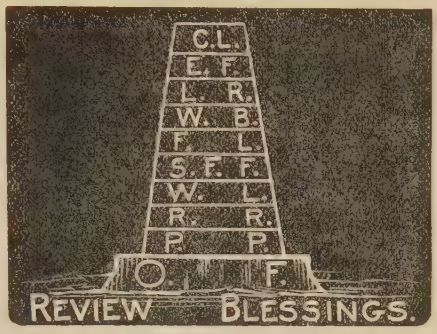
LESSON X.—Who read the law of God to the people? **Ezra and the priests.** Why did the people weep? **Because of their sins.** Why did Ezra tell them to rejoice? **Because God had forgiven them.**

LESSON XI.—Who condemned all Jews to be killed? **The king of Persia.** Who saved their lives? **Esther, his queen.** What did she risk in so doing? **Her own life.**

LESSON XII.—Who was that messenger? **John the Baptist.** What is Jesus called? **The Sun of righteousness.** What is our life without him? **Cold and dark and dead.**

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. Nine of the lessons for this quarter show the blessings that arise from obedience and faith toward God. This simple diagram may serve as a memory help to the school in a general review of the lessons from the stand. Draw it exactly as it is before the session of the school. You can have the letters written in, or write them when you ask the questions. Thus: The foundation stone is **O** and **F**. Can the school tell me what these are? [Ans. *Obedience and Faith.*] What are the direct blessings that are builded on this stone? Lesson I. Peace and Prosperity. Lesson III. Rechabites Rewarded. Lesson V. Wisdom and Learning. Lesson VI. Saved from Fire. Lesson VIII. Foundation Laid. Lesson IX. Walls Built. Lesson X. Law Read. Lesson XI. Esther Favored. Lesson XII. Coming Light. Speak of the remaining three lessons (Nos. II, IV, and VII) that show the results of disobedience.

The Lesson Leaf Once More.

CRITICISMS upon our lesson-plans, and suggestions for their improvement, are always gladly received and carefully considered. Here are two, which came to our office only a day apart from each other. One superintendent in Pennsylvania wrote, "Why do you print the lesson upon the Leaf? Would it not be better to publish the questions and notes, and refer the scholars to their Bibles for the lesson?" On the next day came a letter from a superintendent in Dakota, saying, "We are bothered by the Scripture references in the Lesson Leaf. Some of our teachers wish to change to lessons published by Mr. Blank, which do not have references with the questions; for our classes do not have Bibles to look up the references in. Give us more explanations and no references." We were quite inclined to send to each superintendent a copy of the other man's letter, but instead, wrote to both that we wish to encourage the use of the Bible in the class, and therefore have references in every lesson. But we cannot afford to have our Lesson Leaves driven out by other Houses, and therefore we print the text with each lesson. Every class should be supplied with enough Bibles to furnish a Bible to every scholar.

Review Service for the First Quarter.

Superintendent. How long a period of time is embraced in the lessons of the past quarter?

School. About two hundred years, from the reign of Josiah, the last of the good kings of Judah, to the preaching of Malachi, 450 years before Christ.

Superintendent. To what three periods in Jewish history do these lessons belong?

Bible Classes. The first four lessons relate to the decline and fall of the kingdom of Judah, and show its condition about 600 years before Christ.

Girls' Classes. The lessons from the fifth to the seventh relate to the period of the captivity, when the Jews were exiles in Babylon.

Boys' Classes. The last five lessons belong to the period of the restoration, after the Jews were brought back to their own land.

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.

[During the singing of the last verse three scholars come forward and stand facing the school.]

Superintendent. What can you tell us about the three lands referred to.

First Scholar. Most of our lessons belong to the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. It is a small land, not larger than the States of Massachusetts and Connecticut, yet it has filled the earth with its fame, for out of it came the Gospel for all the world. In the days of David, its empire extended from the Euphrates to the Nile, but at the period of our lessons its scepter was shortened, and finally swept away. For fifty years Zion was a desolation, and ever afterward the land of Judah was subject to foreign rule. At Jerusalem, in our lessons, Josiah reigned and reformed his kingdom, Jeremiah wept while he delivered God's warning of judgment, Zedekiah, the last king, was taken prisoner and dethroned, the returning exiles rebuilt the altar, Ezra read the law, and Malachi gave the last utterances of the Old Testament.

Second Scholar. Another land presented in our lessons is Chaldea, of which Babylon was the capital. This city was one of the most ancient in the world, for the Tower of Babel stands at the beginning of human history. For many centuries it was ruled by its younger sister Nineveh, on the banks of the Tigris, but about the time when Josiah reigned in Judah it won its independence, and then transferred the rule of the Oriental world to the Euphrates. For ninety years Chaldea was the mistress of all lands, and Babylon the lady of kingdoms. Its walls were three hundred feet high, and so wide that six chariots could drive abreast upon them. Within them were the hanging gardens and the palaces of Nebuchadnezzar; and near the city rose the golden image before which all the nobles of the kingdoms bowed, save the three Hebrew worthies. Here the Jews were captives, hanging their harps upon the willows by the streams, until in one night the handwriting appeared upon the wall, and the Persian hosts seized the city. To Babylon belong the lessons which tell of Daniel and his three companions, of Belshazzar's feast, and of the return of the captives.

Third Scholar. The third of the countries in our lessons is Persia, which succeeded Babylon in the empire of the East, and ruled all the lands from India to Ethiopia and the Hellespont. Its capital was Shushan, among the mountains north of the Persian Gulf. Here the kings of Persia sat enthroned in their splendid palace, of which the ruins still remain. Here Esther knelt before Ahasuerus, touching the tip of the golden scepter; and here Nehemiah presented his request to King Artaxerxes that he might rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.

[During the singing of the last verse twelve scholars come forward.]

Superintendent. What prominent persons are named in the lessons of the past quarter?

First Scholar. I speak of Josiah, the young reformer, who lived in a time when Judah had forsaken God and was following idols. At the age of sixteen years he chose the God of his fathers, and thenceforth served him with his whole heart. He destroyed the idols, read the law of the Lord, and strove to lead his people back to the right way.

School. "He did *that which was* right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left."

Second Scholar. I speak of Jeremiah, the weeping prophet. He arose just when the young king Josiah fell in battle, and the reformation of Judah fell with him. He lived through the darkest age of Judah's history, when the people were sinking lower and lower in wickedness. He was a man of tender and gentle spirit, who wept while he delivered God's message, but delivered it though persecuted, imprisoned, and scourged. From him we learn the lesson of faithful testimony against sin.

School. "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved . . . *Is there* no balm in Gilead? *is there* no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

Third Scholar. I speak of the Rechabites, a strange family, who appeared in Jerusalem in the days before its fall. Their conduct gives us two noble examples, that of obedience to parents, and of total abstinence from strong drink.

School. "The words of Jonadab the son of Rechab, that he commanded his sons not to drink wine, are performed; for unto this day they drink none, but obey their father's commandment . . . Therefore thus saith the LORD God of hosts, the God of Israel . . . Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me forever."

Fourth Scholar. I speak of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. He received the throne upon the promise of loyalty to the great king of Babylon; but he broke his plighted faith, and rebelled. As a result he saw his land laid waste, his warriors

slain, his people carried away captive, and his own sons murdered. His eyes were then put out, and he was borne in chains to a dungeon in Babylon.

School. "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion."

Fifth Scholar. I speak of Daniel, the prophet and the prince. He was a captive in Babylon, but for his graces of mind and body promoted to a place in the palace. Here he lived unspotted amid temptation, temperate though surrounded by drunkenness, and in communion with God while all around were idol-worshipers. At the peril of his life he was faithful to duty, and when thrown among the lions he was guarded by God's care.

School. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word."

Sixth Scholar. I speak of the three young Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. While all the other nobles bowed down before the golden image, they stood erect, for they worshiped God alone. Thrown into the fiery furnace, they were preserved alive, and the form of the Son of God was seen walking in the fire by their side. From them we learn the lesson of fidelity to conscience.

School. "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace."

Seventh Scholar. I speak of Belshazzar, the youth who sat upon the throne of Babylon when it fell. As if to ridicule the enemies who were besieging his capital, he held a great feast in his palace; and as if to cast contempt upon the God of the Jews, he brought the holy vessels from the temple to his banqueting hall, and out of them drank in honor of his gods. But in the midst of the revelry appeared the handwriting on the wall warning him of doom, and in that very night the Persian besiegers entered the palace and slew the king upon his throne. His fate warns us against the sin of irreverence toward the God of heaven.

School. "And this *is* the writing that was written, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. This is the interpretation of the thing: MENE; God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. TEKEL; Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting. PERES; Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians."

Eighth Scholar. I speak of Zerubbabel, who led the Jews back from the land of their captivity. The first act of Cyrus, the Persian conqueror of Babylon, was to issue an edict permitting the Jews to return. Fifty thousand of the exiles availed themselves of the privilege, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel journeyed back to Palestine. Their first act was to rebuild the altar of God upon its old foundation, and to renew the sacrifices; but it was twenty-one years before the temple was completed. From their leader we learn the lesson of love and labor for the house of God.

School. "And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the LORD; because *he is* good, for his mercy *endureth* forever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid."

Ninth Scholar. I speak of Nehemiah the nobleman, who left a high station in the court of the Persian king, and journeyed twelve hundred miles to unite his fortunes with his depressed people in Jerusalem. By his energy, courage, and tact the wall of the city was built, and Jerusalem arose once more as the capital of the new Jewish nation. He was earnest in prayer, self-denying in liberality, and zealous for the purity of God's people.

School. "Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good *work* . . . Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we, his servants, will arise and build."

Tenth Scholar. I speak of Ezra the reformer. He was a priest who came from Chaldea to Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah, to instruct the people in the law of God, in which he was a deep student. Through his labors the writings of the Old Testament were gathered together and united into one book. He read the law before a great assembly of the people, and instituted schools and synagogues for its teaching. From his great work, he has been called "the second founder of the Jewish people."

School. "So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading."

Eleventh Scholar. I speak of Esther, the beautiful queen, whose lovely face was the reflection of a more lovely character. She was the queen of Persia, but to save her people she risked her life, and offered herself to die with them if she might not save them. By her act of self-sacrifice she won for herself the love of her people and an undying renown.

School. "So will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish."

Twelfth Scholar. I speak of Malachi, the last of the Old Testament prophets. He lived in the age after Ezra and Nehemiah, when their reformation had spent its strength, and the Jews were outwardly worshipers of God, but in heart following their own ways. Boldly did he rebuke the sins of priests and people, and faithfully did he exhort to paths of righteousness. It was his mission to point toward One who should come as the Messiah of Israel and the Saviour of the world.

School. "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me . . . Unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

SINGING BY THE SCHOOL.

Copies of this Review may be obtained of Phillips & Hunt, 805 Broadway, New York, at the rate of Fifty Cents per hundred, by mail.

The Presiding Elder's Normal Class.

HERE and there a presiding elder in the Methodist Episcopal Church has shown the possibilities of his office in the promotion of intelligent Christianity, Bible study, and efficient Sunday-school work. Recently we have noted the labors of Rev. Horace Reed, presiding elder of the Mattoon District in Illinois. He has organized normal classes in many charges, has given normal lessons in many churches, and has circulated over two hundred copies of the Outline Normal Lessons among the Sunday-school teachers of his district. One can scarcely overestimate the results of such work as this. It may not immediately show its power, for the best things are of slow growth. But it will influence the Sunday-school work of that region long after the district shall have passed into other hands. There will be in many places families where the religion is of an intelligent and scriptural type; schools with here and there a teacher with the highest aims and the most earnest work; young people who will be far above the average in thoughtfulness; and classes which shall send forth trained young men to become preachers of the Gospel, as the result of the high ideals in life set before them. And all these will go on perpetuating, widening, and reproducing the influence set in motion by one earnest presiding elder. Our presiding elders as a class are laborious men, and faithful to their duties. But few of them are brought into direct contact with the young life that is growing up on their districts. It will do them good, and will mightily help the efficiency of the Sunday-school work if they can give close attention to the young people and their needs.

At Home.

. . . CHILDREN'S classes, held on week-day afternoons for religious instruction, are increasing in number. From various quarters we receive inquiries concerning their organization and management. Some pastors hold large meetings, with a plan of mingled entertainment and religious teaching. For half an hour they have readings, declamations, vocal and instrumental music, and calisthenic exercises, by the children, and then occupy the other half-hour with a talk by the pastor on some religious topic. Others hold them, as at Chautauqua and the various assemblies, for instruction in general Bible knowledge. Every Sunday-school assembly has its children's meeting, in which are taught the construction of the Bible, Bible history, and Bible geography, in simple lessons adapted to childhood. In order to meet the demand for children's class lessons at assemblies, Sunday-school institutes, and in churches, a series of leaflets has been prepared by the Rev. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D., which will be used in at least six large Assemblies next summer, and probably in as many more. They contain a course of lessons, with maps, diagrams, blackboard outlines, questions for review and examination. The first series embraces eight leaflets of four pages each, and may be ordered of Phillips & Hunt, New York, or Cranston & Stowe, Cincinnati or Chicago, at two cents for a single leaflet, or ten cents for the set of eight leaflets.

. . . About three months ago the church at Fulton Street, Elizabeth, N.J., was repaired and painted. Among other improvements the Sunday-school room was enlarged and beautified. All around the room, just over the wainscoat, there are pasted the pictures from the Leaf Cluster. The effect is very beautiful and striking. At first sight there is the appearance of frescoing. The colors harmonize with the other colors of the room, and the figures are, of course, appropriate to the purpose for which the room is designed.

. . . During the last week in this month the managers of the Industrial Education Association of the city of New York propose to hold an exhibition of children's handiwork. The makers of goods offered must be under fourteen years of age, and must live in the city or within thirty miles of it. The articles made are divided into seven classes: 1. Wood-work; 2. Metal-work; 3. Needle-work; 4. Practical cookery; 5. Modeling in clay; 6. Designs; 7. Leather-work. The office of the Association is at 21 University Place, where further particulars can be obtained. This idea is something new, and if the boys and girls of New York and vicinity once get interested in it the exhibition will be well worthy of a visit.

Book Notices.

Cassandra's Casket. By Emma Marshall. New York: Robert Carter & Co. Cassandra was a neglected half-orphan whose associations at home were not of a sort to develop a genuine Christian character. Her struggles with misfortune, neglect, suspicion, and her own careless spirit, and the final victory achieved, are here described in a very attractive way.

David Elliott. A Cornish Story. By C. E. Irvine. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. A very good story of life among the fishermen on the Cornish coast. David was a poor lonely lad who had at first a hard fight with evil, but at last he conquered in the way that every tempted soul may conquer.

Afloat. A Story. By the Author of "The Caged Linnet." New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. A very touching story of sea-life, and of life by the sea-shore, showing the fortunes and the misfortunes of a worthy fisherman and his family.

A Lucky Waif. A Story for Mothers, of Home and School Life. By Ellen E. Kenyon. New York: Fowler & Wells Co. In the form of a pleasing story the writer gives her views on the training of children, in the family and in school.

Michael's Treasures; or, Choice Silver. By Emma Marshall. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The greatest treasure Michael had was a poor waif of a child whom he picked up on the beach during a storm and after a wreck. The boy's mother took the child for her own and brought her up. The narrative tells how the treasure was lost and found again.

Over the Sea, and What I Saw. A Monograph. By Rev. Wilbur L. Davidson. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. New York: Phillips & Hunt. A story of European travel in the year 1883. Some of the author's criticisms on works of art will hardly pass unchallenged by all his readers.

The Secret of the Forest; or, A Strange Inheritance. By E. Chapman. With Illustrations. New York:

Robert Carter & Brothers. The romantic finding of a perfect copy of the first edition of Miles Coverdale's Bible (1535) is made the central incident, around which are gathered other incidents of an interesting and instructive character.

A Tangled Web. A Tale of the Fifteenth Century. By Emily Sarah Holt. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. The story deals with some of the most exciting and important facts in English and Scottish history. It is well written, with an evident desire on the part of the author to adhere to the facts of history. The last chapter, on a vexed historic question, will be found especially interesting.

Rose Raymond's Wards. By Margaret Vandegrift. Philadelphia: Porter & Coates. A well-told story of home life, in which loss of property, the struggles with unaccustomed poverty, and the final victory are described. Not the least entertaining part of the narrative is to be found in the poems and stories within the story which were read before the "Society."

The Garroters. A Farce. By W. D. Howells. New York: Harper & Brothers. A very amusing representation of "playing at cross purposes," showing what might happen, and, if a story we once read be true, illustrating what actually happened, in the city of Rome, to a celebrated English author many years ago.

The Mormon Problem. An Appeal to the American People. By Rev. C. P. Lyford. New York: Phillips & Hunt. Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. What to do with Mormonism, the great festering sore upon the body politic, is one of the gravest problems now demanding consideration by our statesmen. Mr. Lyford, by a long residence in Utah, as well as by many years' careful study of the subject, is well qualified to speak on it. He lays bare the ugly ulcer, fixes the responsibility for its existence, and recommends stringent legislation for its extirpation.

Under the Apple Trees. By Sophie Worthington. New York: Phillips & Hunt, Cincinnati: Cranston & Stowe. A quiet but interesting story, showing the unfolding of a girl's life, from a stormy, passionate childhood to a self-controlled, noble womanhood. It will prove a healthful and inspiring book to every girl who reads it, and will be a valuable addition to the Sunday-school library.

Sent to Coventry; or, the Boys of Highbeech. By M. L. Ridley. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. This is a story of life in a boys' school; and when we learn that the offense for which the hero of the tale is "sent to coventry" (or in a more modern phrase "boycotted") by his fellow pupils is that his father is a dry-goods' merchant, and not a "gentleman," we perceive that the scene is laid in England. Perhaps it is well for American boys to learn how narrow is the social horizon of their English cousins; and also that the use of slang is not confined to this side of the Atlantic.

Five Minutes Too Late; or, Leslie Harcourt's Resolve. By Emily Brodie. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. This is a better story than many of the English reprints of this house, and will make an excellent book for the Sunday-school library. It is the story of a boy who was apt to be a laggard with unpleasant duties, such as getting up in the morning and studying his lessons. As he improved in character, let us hope that other boys who read the book may be induced to follow his example.

Lesson Studies from the Book of Genesis. By Eugene Stock. London: The Religious Tract Society. Mr. Stock for several years wrote the "English Teacher's Notes" for our JOURNAL. The "Studies" in this volume are the "Notes" which appeared in the JOURNAL for 1880. We are glad to welcome them in this form, and we doubt not they will be as acceptable and useful in England as they were in this country.

On the Cliff; or, Alick's Neighbors. By Catharine Shaw. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. A sequel to "Fathoms Deep," by the same author, and, like its predecessor, pure in its moral and religious tone, but possessing a rather commonplace line of incidents, padded out with much conversation.

East and West; or, the Strolling Artist. By Emily Brodie. New York: Robert Carter & Brothers. An English story of average merit, mainly occupied with life among the lower classes.

Oughts and Crosses. New York; Carter & Brothers By Jennie Chappell. About a boy who found some "crosses" in the path of doing as he "ought," but found, too, that every cross has its compensation.

Wakulla: A Story of Adventure in Florida. By Kirk Munroe. New York: Harper & Brothers. One of the square little books of the "Harper's Young People's Series," all of which seem to be interesting. This is the story of a family which removed from Maine to Florida, and passed through quite a romantic series of experiences.

Key Words to the King's Treasury. By C. E. Paxson. St. Louis: Parker, Ritter, Nicholls Stationery Company. A little vest-pocket volume of choice Bible readings in outline, with some precious extracts from the letters of Samuel Rutherford.

Those Dreadful Mouse Boys. By Ariel. Boston: Ginn & Co. Boys will read a story about themselves without knowing it when they trace the fortunes of the two little mice in this book, which has been quite popular, and is now found worthy of a second edition.

Worldly Conformity.

THE Rev. Dr. James W. Alexander wrote to a friend: "As I grow older as a parent, my views are changing fast as to the degree of conformity to the world which we should allow to our children. I am horror-struck to count up the profligate children of pious persons, and even ministers. The door at which those influences enter which countervail parental instruction and example, I am persuaded, is yielding to the ways of good society. By *dress*, *books*, *and amusements* an atmosphere is formed which is not that of Christianity. More than ever do I feel that our families must stand in a kind but determined opposition to the fashions of the world, breasting the waves like the Eddystone light-house. And I have found nothing yet which requires more courage and independence than to rise a little, but decidedly, above the par of the religious world around us. Surely, the way in which we commonly go on is not the way of self-denial, and sacrifice, and cross-bearing which the New Testament talks of. 'Then is the offense of the cross ceased.' Our slender influence on the circle of our friends is often to be traced to our leaving so little difference between us and them."

CLASS RECORD FOR MARCH, 1886.

	March 7.	March 14.	March 21.	March 28.
Weather				
Teacher.				
PUPILS.				

Whisper Songs for March.

(Tune, "I Think when I Read.")

TENTH LESSON.

The Word and the Spirit are calling to-day,
And the children are hearing his voice;
O come, let us listen and learn and obey,
And then in his love we'll rejoice.

ELEVENTH LESSON.

O, who is so gracious and kind as our King?
He bids all the children draw near;
To him every sorrow and care they may bring,
And his hand wipes away every tear.

TWELFTH LESSON.

O Jesus, dear Master, thy word is so sweet,
That calls all the children to thee;
I will come at thy call, and will sit at thy feet,
Till the world sees thine image in me.

LESSONS FOR 1886.

First Quarter.

Jan. 3. JOSIAH AND THE BOOK OF THE LAW.....2 Kings 22. 1–13.
10. JEREMIAH PREDICTING THE CAPTIVITY.....Jer. 8. 20–22, and 9. 1–16.
17. THE FAITHFUL RECHABITES..Jer. 35. 12–19.
24. CAPTIVITY OF JUDAH.....2 Kings 25. 1–12.
31. DANIEL IN BABYLON.....Dan. 1. 8–21.
Feb. 7. THE FIERY FURNACE.....Dan. 3. 16–28.
14. THE HANDWRITING ON THE WALL.....Dan. 5. 1–12, and 25–28.
Feb. 21. THE SECOND TEMPLE..Ezra 1. 1–4, and 3. 8–13.
28. NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER.....Neh. 1. 1–11.
Mar. 7. **Reading the Law**.....Neh. 8. 1–12.
14. **Esther's Petition**...Esther 4. 10–17, and 5. 1–3.
21. **Messiah's Messenger**..Mal. 3. 1–6, and 4. 1–6.
28. **First Quarterly Review.**

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